Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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DAUGHTER SHERIDAN IS MY HERO, SAYS AMPUTEE MOTHER

Deana Wilkes of Tipton and life-saving daughter Sheridan

"SHE is my hero, I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for her." Those are the words of Deana Wilkes, whose teenage daughter, Sheridan, called emergency services after she found her mother unconscious at their home.

On the morning of March 3, 15-year-old Sheridan woke to find her mother not up and about as she usually would be. When she went into her bedroom she found 41-year-old Deana, from Tipton, lying on the floor.

Sheridan, who is in Year 10 at RSA Academy, alerted her younger sister and neighbour – nurse Tracy Mansell – and Deana was rushed to Russells Hall Hospital were she was put in intensive care.

Deana had blacked out and, despite medics trying their best, her leg had to be amputated due to lack of blood supply.

Recalling the horrific incident, Deana spoke of pride. The mother of three said: "The last thing I remember was looking through my bedroom window before going to bed. Then I woke up in hospital with my leg amputated. I had been sitting on the bed with my leg underneath the other and then it seems that I had fell off during the night and had some sort of blackout that cut off my blood supply.

"My 15-year-old daughter found me before she went to school and she alerted my other daughter, 10-year-old Madison, to go and fetch a neighbour. It was absolutely awful for them. They must have been so scared but were incredibly brave."

Deana was in intensive care for five days, but didn't wake up until nearly two weeks later. She was finally allowed home after 20 days. She continued: "Sheridan stayed with me until Tracy came and called an ambulance. They could not feel a pulse on me and the vascular team were waiting for me the minute I arrived at hospital.

"Doctors are still not sure what happened but they believe it to be an acute vascular problem that cut my blood supply off. It was touch and go. It was either die or take my leg. Looking back I know that I would not have been here if it wasn't for Sheridan – she is my hero."

Sound of building falling down 'was like explosion'

COLLAPSE SPARKS CALL ON CHURCH

CALLS have been made for landowners to take action over a derelict church after parts of it collapsed, prompting safety fears.

A section of the church hall on Ridding Lane in Wednesbury has come crashing down – much to the shock of the community. Councillor Elaine Costigan, who represents the Wednesbury North ward, has now urged the council to address the issue with the landowners.

She believes the former Ridding Lane Methodist Free Church has been left standing empty for more than 20 years.

Councillor Costigan said: "I couldn't believe I saw when I came down. I think the site is dangerous.

"I feel concerned for residents living close by. What would happen in a thunder storm?

"One of the residents thought it was an explosion when it collapsed. The fire brigade came out and told the owners to demolish it. I think because the church is such an old building it is an accident waiting to happen. The owners have got to do something about it."

The collapse took place last Wednesday. Pictures taken from the scene show the damage left in the wake of the incident.

Parts of the structure have crumbled onto the ground leaving bricks and other debris lying on the floor.

A spokesman for West Midlands Fire Service said firefighters were called at 4.51pm to 'the partial collapse of a derelict building'.

Police were in attendance alongside representatives from Sandwell Council.

A total of eight firefighters attended from Wednesbury and Willenhall.

The collapsed roof of the derelict church

One business owner said they heard a big bang and puff of smoke following the collapse.

Councillor Costigan said the church was converted to a warehouse, dating back around 35 years, before it became derelict. It is the latest derelict building in the town that has prompted safety fears from the community.

A petition was launched to tackle the state of the former Cottage Inn Public House in Wood Green Road. More than 80 people gave their signatures, prompting the council to serve a notice on the landowner to clean up the site.

Fans get kitted out for next season

ALBION have launched their new home kit for next season – and supporters have been flocking to snap-up the strip at the club's stores.

The blue and white strip for the upcoming 2017/18 season has gone on sale at the club shops at the Hawthorns stadium and Merry Hill shopping centre. Supporters said they liked the new strip – but for some, the shirts were a bit expensive.

Margaret Wade, aged 75, from West Bromwich, was out buying a shirt for herself on Friday morning at the Hawthorns.

She said: "It is a really good shirt, my son has also ordered one.

"I am looking for a small one for my great-grandson."

Adam Bunce, 29 from Tipton, who also bought a shirt for himself, said: "I like the new shirt.

"It's seems to feature more blue than the previous one. I will also be returning to get a shirt for my son."

But Ken and Sue Smith, 69 and 66, from Bewdley, felt the new kits were too expensive.

"It is a nice kit but to be quite honest it is a little too expensive, especially when you have grandchildren to buy them for," said Ken.

An adult shirt costs £50, while shorts cost £25 and socks cost £10. A junior shirt will set you back £40 and a full infants kit also costs £40.

Adam Bunce from Tipton, with the new-look shirt for next season

SECURITY

Force withdraws armed personnel

ARMED police were taken off the streets on Tuesday, as the UK's terror threat level was reduced to severe. West Midlands Police withdrew armed officers from patrolling streets and guarding landmark locations in the region. However the officers will remain on standby and will be in police cars and vans dotted around the region as a terror attack remains 'highly likely'.

In the wake of the Manchester terror attack more than 20 sites in the West Midlands have been guarded by armed officers. Along with the 101 or 999 numbers, there is an anti-terrorist hotline, people can call – 0800 789 32. Or to report online terrorist and extremist material, log onto www.west-midlands.police.uk

POLITICS

John Spellar hits out at Met delay

A PARLIAMENTARY candidate has called for 'heads to roll' after a six-month delay to a new Midlands hospital was revealed. The comments from Warley Labour candidate John Spellar, came after hospital chiefs confirmed the opening of the Midland Met Hospital in Smethwick has been put back, from October 2018 to spring 2019.

Mr Spellar said: "Whether responsibility lies with the NHS, the Trust, Carillion or the electrical designer the public need clear answers and heads must roll."

POLICE

Man injured falling from car in chase

A PASSENGER fell from a stolen car during a police chase.

The 28-year-old man suffered head injuries falling from a silver Mini Cooper in Alexandra Road, Tipton. The driver ran off.

The passenger was taken to hospital with a head injury and was later said to be in a stable condition. No-one else was injured in the incident, which happened at 4am on Sunday.

A spokesperson for West Midlands Police said: "Anyone who witnessed the collision or has any information on the incident is asked to call the police on 101 quoting log 455 28/05/17."

INSIDE

IT'S CHICKS IN A BASKET AT FARM

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Nurse's mother: my pain over Lisa

Margaret Skidmore

THE heartbroken mother of a devoted nurse who was raped and murdered in her own home has spoken for the first time about her confrontation with her daughter's killer.

Margaret Skidmore, aged 80, who was herself attacked and left for dead by Leroy Campbell said: "I didn't know that morning what pain the day would bring.

That pain never goes away. I lost a daughter, my friend and carer."

The brave great-grandmother told how she caught 56-year-old Campbell off guard when she called in last November to check on Lisa, 37, who had been off work sick from her job at Bilston Health Centre.

He punched her in the face and head several times and asked if she had any money.

Alerted

Despite being frail and needing sticks to walk, Mrs Skidmore twice confronted Campbell, asking what he was doing there and telling him to go.

Campbell then tried to strangle her with the vacuum cleaner cord, tightening his grip till she passed out.

Coming round 20 minutes later on the floor, she alerted police on her mobile phone.

Neighbours in Mill Croft, Bilston, tried to help but were forced back by the fumes. Mrs Skidmore's daughter Joyce broke the news that firefighters had been unable to resuscitate Lisa who had been raped and murdered upstairs by Campbell before she arrived.

Two weeks ago at Birmingham Crown Court, Campbell was handed a whole life sentence by Judge Mark Wall for his 'grotesque' deeds. Mrs Skidmore said: "May he rot in hell."

Road safety boost call for accident blackspot

A NOTORIOUS 'accident blackspot' which has seen more than a dozen crashes in three years should have a pedestrian crossing installed, according to a councillor.

It comes a week after a 11-year-old boy was hit by a car at the junction of Aldridge Road and Greenholm Road in Great Barr.

A discussion with highways bosses has now been called for. Councillor Tristan Chatfield, who represents the Oscott ward, said that it was a 'matter of time' before someone is killed.

He said: "This has been an on-going issue for far too many years. This is on a route to a lot of schools and it is very dangerous junction and a number of accidents have happened there.

"It is an accident blackspot. Every year there is always something that happens there during term time. Following the latest accident we are going to have a another discussion with Highways bosses to see if we can make progress with it.

Injuries

"It is difficult to get funding released but this is an incredibly tricky junction and it is only a matter of time for something fatal to happen there."

Following the incident last week the boy was taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital with head, pelvic and hand injuries.

Councillor Chatfield continued: "We had a sign up there for a long time warning drivers and we even started a petition and had meetings about it – but sadly we have never found a way to gain the funding to get something installed.

"A pedestrian crossing would be ideal or traffic lights. Anything to slow the cars down as they approach that junction.

"We are lucky that the lad who was hurt this time only had minor injuries. There are so many colleges and schools just around the corner. We need to find out what will work best and now speak with residents and the council to get something sorted."

Last year double yellow lines were painted close to Greenholm Primary School, following a community campaign.

They came as a bid to boost safety and halt parking problems in the area.

Vicar takes up new role for diocese

Rev Sue Oliver, vicar of St Mark's Church in Pensnett, now the warden of readers for the Diocese of Worcester

A BLACK Country vicar has been appointed as the warden of readers for the Diocese of Worcester.

The Rev Sue Oliver, vicar of St Mark's Church in Pensnett, will now take up the role.

Sue has been a key figure in raising funds for the restoration of a stained glass window in her church.

Readers are the name of the Church of England's licensed lay ministers. This new role is a voluntary one in addition to her current post in Pensnett.

There are currently 177 licensed lay ministers working in parish churches throughout Worcestershire and Dudley.

In her new role Sue will communicate with them and help to support them in their ministry.

Before training for ordination, Sue herself trained as a lay minister and has already been working with readers in the north of the Diocese.

Sue said: "I am convinced that God is calling me to serve readers and promote lay ministry as warden of readers, as it is only by his power I can fulfil this responsibility. "My past experience and the most recent experience of working as Archdeaconry of Dudley Warden come together in the duties for this new role which it will be an honour to perform."

Sue was commissioned as Warden of Readers by Bishop John at a training weekend for Lay Ministers at Holland House, a retreat house in Cropthorne near Evesham. She takes over the role from the Rev Canon Dr Sheila Banyard, Rural Dean of Droitwich.

Predator who raped young girls gets 21 years lock-up

A 'SEXUAL predator' who raped young girls – including a 12-year-old schoolgirl – after befriending them on social media has been locked up for 21 years.

Ayden Thompson, of Great Bridge, groomed his victims, the court heard.

The 21-year-old 'charmed and flattered' his youngest victim on social media just before her 13th birthday, when he was 17, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. She described him as her 'first first real boyfriend' and trusted him because he was a lot older than her.

But he persuaded her to engage in sexual activity, which made her feel 'down' and she began to self-harm, said Mr Matthew Brook, prosecuting. Deciding to end the relationship, she agreed to meet Thompson on wasteground where he raped her, the court heard.

Next, he offered a homeless young woman shelter for the night when. She made clear she did not want to have sex with him but in the morning he raped her three times, said Mr Brooks.

He was in a relationship with his third victim but his involvement with other women on social media 'annoyed' her and led to an estrangement. She arranged to go to his home to collect her belongings but on arriving, he raped her twice. In an impact statement, she said Thompson had ruined her life and that she needed to drink alcohol at night to get to sleep 'hoping not to wake up.'

Mr Mohammed Hafeez, defending, said Thompson had had difficulties with anger management since he was 12 years old for which he had received psychiatric help. But he continued to display violence both at home and in the classroom.

Thompson was in foster care 'and clearly a troubled young man himself' when he raped the 12-year-old girl, said Mr Hafeez. Thompson, of Fisher Street, Great Bridge, pleaded guilty to six counts of rape and one of inciting a girl to sexual activity. He was told he must serve at least two-thirds of his 21-year term and would be on licence for a further seven years on his release. He was put on the sex offenders' register for life.

Learners have art on display

KEEN artists who attend Sandwell Adult and Family Learning classes have hung their latest artistic efforts at an exhibition in the borough's arts cafe.

Almost 60 pieces of work produced by 39 learners at Tanhouse Community Centre and Langley Lodge classes have been exhibited at the Arts Café at Central Six in New Square, West Bromwich.

The artistic work at the Learners' Art Exhibition covers subjects including portrait, seascape and flowers using a variety of different art materials.

The exhibition has been supported by Alex Howells, arts and project manager for Sandwell, who supports Sandwell Adult and Family Learning have-a-go sessions to encourage people to try new crafts. The free exhibition opened on Saturday and will run until Monday.

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Cousin in jail con bid was rumbled by officer

A MAN pretended to be his cousin to serve jail time in his place – but was rumbled by a wide awake prison officer.

Mohammed Ahshan Ahmed posed as his relative, Shahab Uddin Ahmed, during a hearing at Birmingham Magistrates' Court in April last year.

Shahab Ahmed was jailed for seven years in 2011 for his role in a £2 million banking scam which allowed him to live a life of luxury and buy flashy cars.

He was later ordered to repay his ill-gotten gains or face more time behind bars and was due to be sentenced at the magistrates' court for failing to pay what he owed.

But his cousin appeared in his place and was sent to prison instead of him.

The truth was only discovered when an officer, who knew what Shahab Ahmed looked like, realised they had jailed the wrong man.

Mohammed Ahmed, of Pershore Road, Edgbaston, was released from prison, but was later arrested and charged with perverting the course of justice.

He denied any wrongdoing but was jailed for 12 months at Birmingham Crown Court in September last year after being found guilty.

The 36-year-old this week challenged his conviction arguing he did not receive a fair trial because he was not present in court.

But his appeal was rejected by three of the country's most senior judges who said it was his choice to miss his trial by refusing to leave his cell.

Pupil is in swim at championships

A YEAR 7 student picked up four gold medals at the West Midlands Swimming Championships.

Warley Wasps swimming club Jessie-Leigh Jenns, was able to fight off competition in four out of her seven races to secure a 1st place position on the podium and a win of £50 for being announced as head girl at the swimming meet. She said: "I am excited about my wins and I live to be in the water."

She also added that she was doing it to cheer her coach up who had recently been in hospital as she knew the wins would cheer him up. Jessie-Leigh is now working her way up the league table and is currently sitting in 1st place for breaststroke within her age range.

Pub extension scheme sent in

A PUB has applied to create an extension. The Yew Tree, on Albion Road, Greets Green, West Bromwich, has lodged an application with Sandwell Council to create more room. A two-storey extension would be built.

Magic ear helps schoolboy hear again

Armaan with his speech therapist

A SIX-YEAR-OLD who has bravely battled a host of serious health complications is going from strength-to-strength thanks to a special 'magic ear'.

After being born prematurely at 25 weeks weighing just one pound 10 ounces, Armaan Mahay has had to go through a series of operations to help his heart and liver. The youngster, from Walsall, also suffered a severe bleed on his brain and needed laser eye surgery.

At four-months-old his family was told the devastating news that he was profoundly deaf – with no hearing at all. However, after being transferred to Birmingham Children's Hospital's specialist audiology team a few months later they were given hope after it was discovered Armaan did have some hearing.

After initially using hearing aids, Armaan was offered cochlear implants – electronic devices fitted through surgery that make sounds louder by doing the work of the damaged parts of the inner ear to provide sound signals to the brain. The 'magic ears' replicate the sense of hearing by electronically stimulating the cochlea to bypass the non-functioning hair cells of the inner ear. It has two parts; one implanted inside the ear during an operation and an outer part called a sound processor.

Mum Sharmila Samrai, said: "We are incredibly proud of how much Armaan has achieved. To be told at birth that he wouldn't walk or talk deeply traumatised us and we would watch him at every milestone with baited breath hoping and praying that he would be ok. He has proved everyone wrong and come such a long way."

Pensioner in wheelchair followed home by raider

A WHEELCHAIR-bound pensioner had his house burgled after he was followed home from a post office.

The man, aged in his 60s, had cash stolen from a wallet left in his lounge in Church Street, Tipton by an unknown Asian man, who police would urgently like to speak to.

The released image

Police bosses called the incident a 'despicable crime' and said the pensioner was an 'easy target'.

The suspect followed the elderly man home after – initially picking up an object for the pensioner which he had dropped on the floor.

The elderly man put his bins out on return, at which point the suspect asked if he could fill a bottle of water for him in good faith and asked the pensioner to wait outside.

But on the way out of the kitchen, the pensioner saw the man in his lounge and noticed his wallet and mobile had moved from where he left them. "Prior to the burglary, the man had been in the post office on Tividale Road, Tividale," said Sandwell Pc Dan Cartwright. "He dropped something onto the floor, and a man picked it up for him.

Despicable

"The elderly man then went home to put his bins out, and was followed by the man from the post office. The gentleman told the man to leave, and after he had gone saw that cash had been taken from his wallet. This is a despicable crime against someone who has clearly been thought of as an 'easy target'."

Community leaders have urged the public to help police catch the suspect.

Oldbury councillor Suzanna Hartwell said: "This is absolutely despicable. It really gets my blood boiling. My thoughts are exactly the same as the police. I am asking the community to show their support. This person, whoever did it, needs to have the book thrown at them."

Anyone who can help police, such as by identifying the man in the released photographs and or providing information, should call Pc Cartwright by dialling 101 and then extension 811 3083, or quoting the crime number 20SW/92847A/17.

Families flock to pop-up beach

Apprentice museum service assistant Emily Westley, of Walsall, and museum assistant Kalon Smith,

THE sun may not have managed to keep his hat on for Bank Holiday Monday but families still flocked to a pop-up beach at a historic house for some half-term fun.

It's just a short hop to the seaside in landlocked Sandwell, with families celebrating under the grey clouds at the Manor House Museum in West Bromwich.

The museum on Hall Green Road opened a giant sandpit and put on a range of family craft activities for free.

The fun kicked off with Manor House By The Sea, featuring donkey rides, Punch and Judy shows, seaside activities and crafts are all happening on the grounds until tomorrow, Friday.

Rachel Kinsella, visitor services officer at the museum, said: "Families can have all the feeling of the sea side without actually having to drive all the way there.

"The weather wasn't as nice as we'd hoped but it is still going ahead. It's the third or fourth year that we've held the beach at the museum but this is the first time it's rained.

"It'll all still go ahead this week though and we hope families can still enjoy themselves."

Manor House By The Sea will take place from 11am until 3pm everyday until Friday.

For details, call 0121 588 2985.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saddlers pick up family award

WALSALL Football Club have won the Football League Family Excellence Award for the 2016-17 season.

The award recognises clubs for their commitment to attracting families and young fans. The Saddlers were recognised by the EFL for a host of reasons – including friendly staff and match day entertainment.

Club secretary Daniel Mole said: "Here at Walsall Football Club we pride ourselves on the role we play within the community and have worked hard to create a positive, family-orientated matchday experience."

Council to take on new bosses

SANDWELL Council is looking to appoint two new bosses.

The vacancies are for a new monitoring officer and director of housing and communities.

Applicants for the monitoring officer role were being interviewed this week. The successful candidate will be paid between £88,953 and £103,731.

The council will hear from candidates for the director role today (Thursday).

Council leader Councillor Steve Eling said: "By law we need a monitoring officer."

21 bands to play Lockstock festival

A BLACK COUNTRY town is to host its own music festival.

The one-day event, called Willenhall Lockstock, takes place on September 3 at Memorial Park. It will be a showcase for musicians and will be headlined by internationally recognised Hats Off to Zeppelin.

The event will run 2pm to 9.30pm and feature 21 bands playing across three stages. Proceeds from ticket sales will go to charity. For details visit www.willenhalllockstock.co.uk

Town hall concert for country and blues star

AMERICAN country and blues singer Rhiannon Giddens is to play in Birmingham on a UK tour at the end of the year.

The 40-year-old musician, who is also a member of Carolian Chocolate Drops, will be at Birmingham Town Hall on November 19.

She is the lead singer, violinist and banjo player with the group.

Giddens is touring her second solo album Freedom Highway, which was released earlier this year.

Ballet bound for Brum

THE Birmingham Royal Ballet will be putting on a special show this month. The ballet will bring its production Coppelia to Birmingham Hippodrome. It will run for five nights from June 13 until June 17. Tickets start from £16 and are available from www.birminghamhippodrome.com

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COUNTY NEWS

Display of Lego builds fan base

HUNDREDS of Lego fans have visited a special exhibition of models made up of the toy plastic bricks since it opened at Wolverhampton Art Gallery last month.

The Great Wall of China, Niagara Falls, the Great Pyramid of Giza, and Old London Bridge all feature in master Lego artist Warren Elsmore's breathtaking Brick Wonders exhibition.

The 70-strong show, which also includes a modern surgical operating theatre, runs at the Lichfield Street gallery until Wednesday July 5.

Severn Trent sees profits increase

WATER company Severn Trent saw growth in both turnover and profits for its last financial year.

The firm, which serves 4.3 million customers across the Midlands and Mid Wales, said there had been strong operational improvements in the 12 months to the end of March.

Group turnover was ahead by 3.7 per cent at £1.81bn with pre-tax profit up 7.8 per cent to £544m. Severn Trent, which has the lowest combined average bills in Britain of £341 a year in 2017-2018, invested around £680m in 2016-2017 in its network.

It's in the can for film buffs

A CINEMA is holding its own 'Cans' film festival this summer. The alternative movie festival will see classic films screened at Birmingham's Electric Cinema, in Station Street – with canned beers and cider on hand.

Where possible, the brewmaster will be introducing the film and sharing secrets of the canned beer trade. The Cans Festival opens on June 15 with High Fidelity, starring John Cusack to match Island Records Session IPA.

Boredom afflicts half of workers

BOREDOM afflicts more than half of workers in the West Midlands, new statistics from CV-Library, the jobs website, has found.

Of the 51.3 per cent that admitted to boredom, almost two-thirds (62.7 per cent) said they had looked for a new job as a result of a dull work life.

The survey, which asked 1,200 professionals about boredom at work, found almost a third (31.3 per cent) of workers in the region admitted to feeling bored every day.

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Charities teaming up for park relay run

TWO charities are teaming up to launch a flagship event to raise thousands of pounds for their causes. Birmingham St Mary's Hospice, which supports patients in the Black Country, and St Basils will host the inaugural Sunset Squad Relay on July 22.

It will be the first event of its kind to be held in the second city. On the day, teams of four to six participants will challenge themselves to run as many 5k laps around Cofton Park as possible.

The day will also cater for participant's friends and family too by having live music, food, and games for everyone who comes along to show their support.

Barrie Hodge, head of fundraising and communications at St Basils, said: "We are delighted to be working with Birmingham St Mary's Hospice on this event. We love working in partnership and this is an example of two of Birmingham's most important organisations working together to make our city better for all. It is going to be a fantastic event. "

Lucy Watkins, events manager at Birmingham St Mary's Hospice, added: "This promises to be a really exciting yet challenging event for all participants. We're looking for teams who think they can go the distance both physically and by raising vital funds for two amazing causes. We have prizes for the squad who completes the most laps and for the runner who completes the fastest laps, plus a commemorative medal for everyone who takes part."

Tickets for this event are now on sale. For more information visit www.sunsets quadrelay.eventbrite.co.uk

Students' first-hand account of Holocaust

By Lucy Thompson

HISTORY students in Sandwell will have the privilege to hear testimony from a Holocaust survivor, Mala Tribich MBE.

Year 10 and 12 students from a Tipton academy on Monday June 5 will be hosting their special guest as part of a visit organised by the Holocaust Education Trust (HET).

Mr Daulton Redmond who is principal at the RSA Academy, said: "It is a privilege for us to welcome Mala Tribich to our school and her testimony will remain a powerful reminder of the horrors so many experienced.

"We are grateful to the Holocaust Educational Trust for co-ordinating the visit and we hope that by hearing Mala's testimony, it will encourage our students to learn from the lessons of the Holocaust and make a positive difference in their own lives."

Testimony

The testimony will be followed by a question and answer session to enable students at the Bilston Road school in Tipton to better understand the nature of the Holocaust and to explore its lessons in more depth.

Karen Pollock MBE, chief executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said: "The Holocaust Educational Trust educates and engages students from across the UK, from all communities about the Holocaust and there can be no better way than through the first-hand testimony of a survivor.

"Mala's story is one of tremendous courage during horrific circumstances and by hearing her testimony, students will have the opportunity to learn where prejudice and racism can ultimately lead.

"At the Trust, we impart the history of the Holocaust to young people, to ensure that we honour the memory of those whose lives were lost and take forward the lessons taught by those who survived."

More information on the Holocaust Educational Trust is available on its website, which can be accessed by logging on to http://www.het.org.uk/

Real animal magic down on the farm

Mavis the Shropshire ewe with herdsman Wayne Vale and Scarlett Willmott at Sandwell Park Farm

CHILDREN got up close and person with their furry and feathered favourites over the bank holiday weekend. Families visiting Sandwell Park Farm were given a treat as they were allowed to get close to the animals.

Smiling youngsters were able to get their hands on goats, rabbits, chicks at the special event as families flocked to the Black Country beauty spot in the sunshine.

The Woolly Weekend event was put on to allow families to get closer to their favourite animals, including the farm's new arrivals, the chicks and lambs. They were allowed to handle the chicks, while there was also a goat milking session. They were even able to try their hands at sheep shearing. Sheep shearer Wayne Vale was on hand to guide the youngsters through the tricky task.

He said: "You get some who fidget around when you're doing the shearing but overall it wasn't too bad. All the events had the families interested. This is what it's all about, we're open to the public and it's all about making it a big attraction and making sure the kids and their families have a lovely day."

Craft events and machinery displays were also put on to keep visitors entertained.

With some of the chicks is Nevaeh Handy, aged eight, of Kingswinford

Comedian gets Frank about hero, legend Ali

DETAILS of an upcoming Frank Skinner documentary about Muhammad Ali have been confirmed.

The comedian has been seen filming at his boxing heroes training camp in Pennsylvania in recent months as preparation for the show has been ongoing. It is one of several locations Skinner visited for the one-off, hour-long programme, which will air on BBC One

In Ali's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky he meets the next-door neighbour who witnessed the teenage boxer's single-minded dedication to his craft.

He meets Ali's younger brother Rahaman, a key figure in the boxer's entourage and his closest confidante.

He also meets Ali's wife Khalilah, who stood alongside her husband when he was banned from boxing for refusing to fight in Vietnam.

Skinner also met the bare-knuckle boxer from an Oxfordshire council estate who became one of Ali's dearest friends, and the actor who played alongside Ali in a little-known musical on Broadway.

The comic himself said: "I loved Ali since I was a child. I loved the warrior, the entertainer, the craziness that surrounded him.

"I met him, as a trembling fanboy, a few times in the 1990s, but I only had the courage to ask for an autograph and a couple of photos.

"This project gave me the chance to question his family, friends and his boxing inner-circle and explore the truth about the man."

Run spotlight on modern slavery

A CHARITY fun run to help raise awareness of modern slavery is taking place in the Black Country next week.

The pits stop fun run will take place in Walsall Arboretum between midday and 4pm on Saturday, June 10.

The 2.5 km route will start in the Arboretum extension, go round the lake, and back through the Beacon Gate. Runners can choose to do 5km or 10km and the event is open to everyone. The fun will also include a bouncy castle and face painting. There is no registration fee for entering the event. All money raised will go towards Hope for Justice's Hope Challenge 2017, an annual fundraising event to help free those trapped in slavery and trafficking.

Online registration for the fun run is open via www.eventbrite.co.uk

£2.55m paid for industrial site

A SEVEN-ACRE industrial site has been snapped up for more than £2.55 million. The land at Bloomfield Road, Tipton, sold after going up for auction. It is near Bloomfield Recycling and a Texaco garage and features two industrial units.

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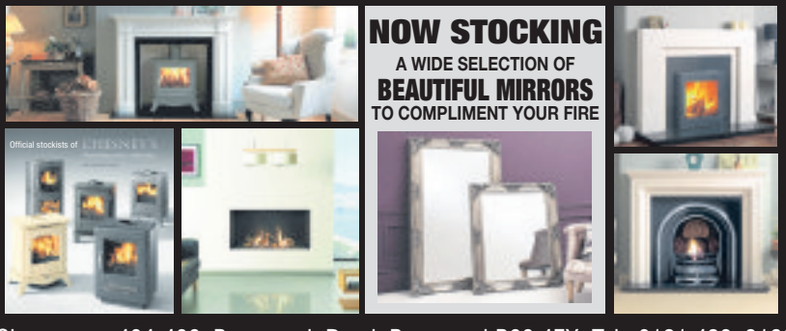

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Nursery gets a rating of outstanding by watchdog

A NURSERY which allows all of its children to make 'excellent progress in education' has been rated 'outstanding' by the education watchdog.

Tiny Tots Academy, based in West Bromwich, was given the highest possible marks across the board following the latest Ofsted inspection.

This was an improvement on the nursery's previous inspection, which had been rated 'good' two years ago.

Inspectors rated the centre, located on Walsall Street, outstanding in the categories of 'effectiveness of the leadership and management', 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment', 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' and 'outcomes for children'.

Tiny Tots cares for 80 children aged up to five-years-old. The academy employs 15 staff.

The inspection was carried out on May 2.

An inspector said: "Excellent leadership, accurate self-evaluation, and commitment from the provider and staff to continuous improvement has helped to raise the quality of the provision to an even higher level.

"Partnerships with parents and other providers are exceptionally effective.

For example, the provider and staff offer workshops and innovative guidance sessions to help parents support their child's learning at home.

"Staff plan inspiring activities that captive children's interests and imaginations.

"All children make excellent progress based on their starting points."

Trust in focus with exhibition

A COMMUNITY trust is launching a visual arts and photography exhibition tomorrow, Friday. The North Smethwick Development Trust devised the project to celebrate the impact volunteers have on communities.

It will bring together several Smethwick based charitable organisations including Brushstrokes, Smethwick Foodbank, Friends & Neighbours, St Albans, Tipton Litter Watch and NSDT.

All the photographs on display have been taken by Smethwick based photographer Ellie Gibbons. Ellie said: "In my work I am interested in the people and places that inspire my thinking and where possible to see the colour, quirks, humour and beauty in life."

Appeal to trace relatives of fallen

A SCHOOL wants to contact relatives of war heroes listed on a memorial.

Pupils at St Michael's High School in Rowley Regis, who will be making clay poppies, has invited relatives of the fallen still living in the area to

Court to be 'zombie escape' attraction

The former magistrates court building

WEST Bromwich's former magistrates court is set to be brought back to life – as a zombie escape room attraction.

Leisure bosses behind the popular entertainment event are eager to take over the court building, saying its cells and layout would provide the perfect backdrop with an opening date as soon as July. The site would be transformed into a 'horror base' with crystal maze type activities set out with the time pressure threat of being caught by a zombie.

The Grade II Listed building, in Lombard Street West, dates back to 1890 and was shut in 2011 as part of reduction in courts across England and Wales.

Bosses of business Zombie Infection say that work has already begun on the site with moveable props and a tidying of the building inside.

Stefan Fletcher, owner, said: "Our vision for West Bromwich was to take it to the next level, not only as a company but as an event so we looked for a property that we could operate consistently that offers mystery but at the same time has a layout and history that aids in the storyline." He continued: "The themes behind our sites are an apocalyptic three-hour evade type mission where "survivors" of a Zombie Virus have to last the term while completing some simple tasks. We utilise old and interesting buildings on an ad-hoc basis.

Councillor Bawa Dhallu, who represents the West Bromwich Central Ward, said: "It has been stood derelict and empty for some time now, so this may be an odd attraction but we welcome something being done with the site."

Historic former foundry set to make way for site

A FIRE-STRICKEN historic former foundry in Smethwick is being demolished and could make way for a new commercial site, it has been revealed.

Incanite Foundries Ltd, in Cornwall Road, has stood in a crumbling state since being gutted by a huge blaze last November.

However, new Northern Ireland owners Ballyvesey Holdings Ltd, hope to breathe new life into the area by developing the site into offices and storage units. The site has remained derelict since its closure in 2014.

Nigel Birkmyre, director of Ballyvesey Holdings, said: "We are in the early stages of demolishing it at the moment as it was in a pretty bad state.

"We will know for sure what we will be doing with it in the next few months, but we have one or two options at the minute based around a commercial site for offices and storage.

"At present we are getting it levelled out into shape and we want to modernise it and bring it back to life in a new form."

Demolishing

More than 40 firefighters tackled a huge blaze at the site last year, as mounds of rubbish had caught alight in the back of the building.

Mr Birkmyre continued: "The site is quite big but we will be demolishing all of it. We bought it about 12 months ago and there was a lot of waste in there that people had dumped and it had just been left.

"Then there was the fire and it caused a big problem for us. Water had to be pumped into it for days and days. It was devastating."

Around 100 staff lost their jobs at the site after it went into administration three years ago.

They were awarded an £186,000 payout over the lack of consultation.

Following major investment at the base, including a £1.4 million new aluminium foundry, it was hit by falling turnover and the loss of a number of customers in 2013.

Ninder Johal, president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said: "The confidence in the Black Country and Sandwell has been rising over a number of years. This long-standing piece of land which has now been purchased shows that inward investment is key to economic in the region. I am pleased to see that this company is doing something productive."

Read all about it, for pyjama party

Children dressed in their pyjamas with parents and Sam Lavender from Sandwell Libraries

SANDWELL libraries teamed up with Cornerstone Nursery in Rowley Regis to organise a pyjama party. Parents and children came along to the nursery with many dressed in pyjamas to enjoy some bed-time story books read to them by Sam Lavender who works for Sandwell Libraries.

Children and parents also sang songs accompanied by Silvia Sermon, the nursery's deputy manager, on her guitar. Silvia is thrilled the nursery has such great links with Sandwell Libraries. She said: "We know how important it is to get children and parents to read together and many of our families visit the library regularly.

"We are very fortunate to have support from staff at our local library in Blackheath and the children and parents very much enjoyed our pyjama party."

The pre-school, based at The Flame Community Church in Cardale Street, has organised various activities designed to improve children's literacy skillsl.

They also took part in a project called "Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL)". The nursery organised home visits and sessions at Cornerstone nursery designed to encourage parents and carers to read more with their children, learn new rhymes together and do more writing and drawing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Boy aged nine is hurt in accident

A YOUNG boy was taken to hospital after a crash.

The nine-year-old was involved in the crash involving a car in Birmingham.

West Midlands Ambulance Service was called to Heathfield Road in Handsworth at around 6.30pm last Wednesday.

An ambulance, a paramedic officer and the Midlands Air Ambulance with a trauma doctor on board were sent.

The boy was taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital. The boy was later said to be in a 'stable' condition.

Dogs get lion's share of votes

PET owners in the West Midlands prefer dogs over cats, new research reveals.

The study, conducted by Provident, showed 46.32 per cent of people said they were a 'dog person', compared with 32.11 per cent who said they were a 'cat person'.

A total of 2,000 people took part in the survey.

The research also revealed dog owners on average shell out £254.73 a year to repair or replace damaged furniture caused by dogs, compared to £212.02 for cats.

Learners show off their talents

ARTISTS who learn at adult and family classes have hung their latest artistic efforts at an exhibition in a Black Country borough's arts cafe.

Almost 60 pieces of learners' work produced by 39 learners at Tanhouse Community Centre and Langley Lodge classes have exhibited their works at the Arts Café at Central Six in New Square, West Bromwich.

The art at the Learners' Art Exhibition covers a variety of subjects including portrait, seascape and flowers.

Votes bring in £700 for foundation

MEMBERS who voted at the Tipton and Coseley Building Society's annual meeting last month helped raise nearly £700 for a number of Black Country charities.

For every online, branch and postal meeting vote received, the Tipton pledged to donate money to its foundation. In total, 3,276 votes were cast, and members completed a satisfaction survey. Some 90 per cent of respondents said they would be likely to recommend the society to a friend.

Carers' celebration

A SPECIAL carers' event which celebrates unsung community heroes is being held at Birmingham Symphony Hall next month. In its third year, the free event held on all four of Symphony Hall's foyers will kick off Carers Week which runs from June 12 to June 18.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Weathering the storm of wrong forecasts

LIKE many of you, I got really excited about the weather forecasts telling us about an early start to summer and the sizzling bank holiday weekend. So on Saturday I poured myself a nice cool drink and sat on the patio to read the newspaper. At least I did for about an hour, before it became cold, dark and damp, and I had to go inside put a jumper on.

Then, with similar predictions for Sunday, I hunted out a nice country pub to sit outside. When it again turned cold and started raining. I suppose that is what we call a barbecue summer.

And then there was Bank Holiday Monday, which was damp, overcast and gloomy.

And people wonder why we are sceptical about global warming.

❒❒❒

THE vigil in memory of the 22 killed in the Manchester bombing, which was held in Birmingham last week, was a fitting tribute and a great credit to those who turned up to pay their respects.

At least it was a credit to most of them. How sad that a few idiots had to spoil the event by trying to turn into a demo.

There really were some people who saw fit to turn out for this sombre occasion brandishing the all-too-predictable "Refugees welcome" placards. Do these people never take a day off? Do they ever talk about anything other than politics?

If the party leaders vying to be prime minister can suspend their hostilities for a few days, then surely these would-be Wolfie Smiths can do the same. What has a memorial to those murdered at a children's concert got to do with Government policy on refugees? Nothing.

There are debates to be had on the thorny subject of immigration and asylum, and there is a time and place to do that. A memorial to murder victims certainly isn't it.

❒❒❒

TIME was if you wanted to pick up an award for artistic endeavour, but were devoid of any talent, then the Turner Prize really was the only show in town.

But this year it seems that the Royal Horticultural Society has also got on board, with the award for Best Show Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.

The accolade went to James Basson, for what can only be described as resembling a fly-tipping hotspot in the grounds of a derelict building. A few rocks strewn on the ground, looking like a bit of builder's waste, accompanied by an unruly mass of weeds.

Basson says his creation "is not supposed to be pretty," but is "stark and monumentally brutal."

Which is pretty much what I say about my garden.

Wedding woes, gardening delights and terrible tragedy

Alan Partridge would be proud, after one radio presenter's recent on air quiz gaffe

Chelsea Flower Show's Joe Swift, still keeping up appearances among the hyacinths

Pippa Middleton's wedding and the cheeky pageboy, but hasn't it always been so?

Presenter's moor sorry after gaffe

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THE spirit of Alan Partridge lives on at BBC Radio Leeds where presenter Nathan Turvey invited listeners to guess the identity of a 'well-known person who has been in the news this week' from a series of musical clues, including Suffer Little Children by the Smiths and Psycho Killer by Talking Heads. The answer was the Moors Murderer, Ian Brady. The BBC has apologised for this hideously crass blunder. I find myself wondering whether Nathan Turvey is related to Rik Mayall's inept 'investigative reporter' of blessed memory, Kevin Turvey.

SUMMERTIME and the living is easy. We humans are a tropical species, hairless and low-fat and born to be warm. A hot spell like this recreates the savannah and jungles of our ancient roots, and suits us very nicely. The one thing we fear is the cold. All this probably explains why, although we are all aware of global warming, you won't find many people who are scared of it. A few more degrees? Bring it on.

THIS is how it is going to be. The terrorists strike. Within hours the authorities reveal the suspect was "known to police." The floral tributes pile up. Our screens fill with images of smiling people, now dead or maimed. At a rally, the crowd declares it will not be intimidated. Religious leaders insist we are all united. Lots of candles are lit and some mawkish poetry is read. And then we wait for it all to happen again, as it surely will. For there is no end.

THESE Islamist fanatics, unlike the IRA, are not seeking any sort of settlement. Time is not an issue for them. Sometimes, fiction speaks more eloquently than fact. The aim of jihadists has never been expressed better than by Abu Nazir, the terrorist warlord in the excellent and well-researched US series Homeland. This is Nazir's chilling warning to the West: " Do you have the perseverance, the tenacity, the faith? Because we do. You can bomb us, starve us, occupy our holy places, but we will never lose our faith. We carry God in our hearts, our souls. To die is to join him. It may take a century, two centuries, three centuries, but we will exterminate you."

MEANWHILE, this from Harun Khan, secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, describing the Manchester bombing: "May the perpetrators face the full weight of justice both in this life and the next." Ah yes, the next life. That'll be the place where murdered children never really die but live as angels with the Baby Jesus. The place where the rich and haughty are brought down a peg, and the meek are exalted. The place where terrorists are martyrs, living in eternal paradise tended by beautiful virgins. Is it not time in this 21st century for a global acceptance that there is no hereafter? Let us move on. Without the promise of paradise there would be no suicide bombers.

I'M not sure whether anyone records such things but is this becoming a record year for birdsong? The volume, at all times of day, and the variety of birdsong is astonishing. I write this in the early afternoon as two big-mouthed blackbirds and a gabby goldfinch are giving it some welly in the garden. A sweet symphony to end a savage week.

IN middle age and old straw hat, doesn't Joe Swift, presenter of Chelsea Flower Show, look the image of his father? Clive Swift, 81, is best known as Richard Bucket, the eternally suffering husband in the BBC sitcom Keeping Up Appearances. When Joe looks to camera introducing the begonias at Chelsea, you half-expect him to come out with: "Oh, for goodness' sake, Hyacinth . . ."

AFTER my gripping account of my holiday-cuisine creation, Pilchard Surprise (boil a pilchard in pasta sauce until it disintegrates), here's something more enticing. I took an old bottle of Madeira on our all-boys holiday to Scotland and used it to create a dessert with all the healthy, well-intentioned fruit packed by our wives. I give you Madeira Delight. 1) Put a layer of chopped apples and pears in a bowl, cover with Madeira, add a little sugar and taste. 2) Add a layer of chopped bananas, cover with Madeira, add a little sugar and taste. 3) Add a layer of tangerine segments, cover with Madeira, add a little sugar and taste. 4) Place in fridge for three hours. 5) Try to remember where you put it.

A RARE sight. I followed a Hillman Avenger all the way from Glasgow to Carlisle. Most of these once-cherished saloons have rotted away. I believe it was called the Avenger to fight for sales against Ford's all-conquering Cortina. Time teaches us that the real avenger of cars built before the 1990s was rust.

AFTER that pageboy flicked a V-sign during Pippa Middleton's wedding, a photographer writes to the Daily Telegraph complaining bitterly about "the current craze for posturing, pouting and V-signs in photographs." A current craze? Come off it. In our official school photograph of 1965, one first-former in the front row sticks his tongue out while his mate gives a V-sign. It was pure madness with no hope of escape and as soon as the photographer delivered his prints, vengeance for the two boys was swift and painful.

TALKING POINT

My heroic vigilante with write on his side

WE are told to never meet our heroes, in case it turns out to be a let down.

But I have a new favourite person with whom I would just love to come face to face with. And I know it would not be a disappointment. The trouble is, I do not know who he is. Nobody does.

My new hero is as mysterious as the artist Banksy, but he deals in far more serious matters, righting wrongs under cover of darkness liked a caped crusader. He is the self-proclaimed Grammar Vigilante.

We have all seen what is known as grocer's English, market stalls advertising 'cauliflower's' or shops selling pairs of 'sock's' for example.

In my home town there's even a barber with a sign promoting 'haircut's' and a 'shoppers car park', with no apostrophe, presumably as the sign writers could not decide where one went. I have even seen a pub advertising 'bar snack's'.

This is where the Grammar Vigilante comes in, correcting shop signs in his home city of Bristol, saving the world from poor English standards.

Wherever there's an errant apostrophe, he is there. If a word needs punctuation adding, he is there for that too, using a specially made kit he calls an apostrophiser, basically an extended broom handle with a sticker on the end.

From a journalist's point of view, I am biased of course, but poor spelling and bad grammar is so frustrating to see. So for that, Mr Grammar Vigilante, we salute you.

And when we are told in the summer that English exam results are better than ever maybe we should give him some credit, particularly when it seems at the minute that so many people are ignorant to the difference between the words their, there and they're. Or you're and your.

Some clearly do not know how to recognise plurals or possessives and shorthand text speak (ur or yr, for example), doesn't help.

Our man has been operating for 13 years, but remains anonymous, claiming what he does is a job worth pursuing.

The reaction to his heroic deeds has been mainly positive, with one thanking him for covering up the rogue apostrophe in his sign for 'Cambridge Motor's'. However one business owner took offence to the correcting of the word gentlemen's, going so far as to describe our man's antics as rude.

Another critic even said our man should take a look at his own monicker as apostrophes are punctuation, not grammar.

Whatever one's own take on the matter, every high street is littered with such errors and I would suggest our mystery man spreads his work around the country, or at the very least councils employ someone to do a similar job.

They could start in Wolverhampton, where, I kid you not, there is as big a banner as you can see promoting 'Jone's Lane WMC'! MARK SHIPP

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Sick of hearing how well pensioners are treated

THANKS to Tess, my conscience is now clear. I have long believed the so-called Winter Fuel Allowance to be one of those bribes to us crusty old devils. Obviously, any party offering this or maybe increasing it results in us firing up the zimmer frame and jumping the red light in order to place our cross against the party in question.

What it should be called is Pension Christmas Bonus. Am I to believe that Lord Dunfunkington in his London 20 million pad needs this? Do I believe that Jim and Jane in the Canaries are feeling the cold? So no prob with me if I have to put my hand into my wallet next Christmas instead of using my Christmas bonus.

Then of course we have the much discussed and apparently vitally important Triple Lock. No longer will us pensioners (the ladies dripping in gold, as they attend their weekly dance in the church hall and chat about their next 'Turkey and Tinsel' week; the blokes resplendent in Armani suits) get that two and half per cent on our already-inflated pensions. No, sorry my quick-stepping fossils, you'll make do with inflation and that's it.

Then of course I've stuck two fingers up to the Grim Reaper long enough to be provided with a free TV licence. I'd probably lose that with means testing.

I am heartily sick and tired about hearing how well pensioners are treated.

ALAN M ETHERIDGE
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
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Remainers don't want to be sheep

PETER Madeley seems to think that he has the authority to tell Remainers that they must act like sheep.

Instead of criticising Remainers Peter, come up with at least one solid fact to show that Brexit will be a success.

Have you travelled extensively around the EU, have you done millions of pounds worth of business there as I have? All my experience tells me that it will be a disaster. Even a new immigration policy will bring little if any benefits.

Most immigrants are grateful for the opportunity they are given.

We will not attract the best doctors, nurses, carers etc. Who wants to work in a country that doesn't really want them?

The NHS is in desperate need of top quality people from Europe and the way we talk about the EU will put them off coming here. The Common Fisheries Policy is now working as fish stocks are growing.

ROGER WATTS
Walsall

Let's take right gear for progress

IT seems like the villagers of South Staffordshire take umbrage at the letters I put in E&S about the loss of jobs due to the protests by the 'villagers' in that area.

It seems they don't like freight trains, lorries, or any vehicle that makes a noise, well let me ask them this, when they go shopping at the supermarket, or they take fuel at petrol station, or go to the garden centre for plants for their lovely gardens, how do they think it gets there, by carrier pigeon?

Being a lorry driver for over 30 years, then a transport manager for another 20 years I have seen the need for better infrastructure to get goods to destinations on time and in good condition, but this is not helped if every new development is held up by protests against modernisation of infrastructure.

This great country of ours needs to get into the right gear for us to progress in the modern world, not be held up by the few to the detriment of the many.

MR J WHEELER
Wednesbury

Eureka on my heating allowance

SITTING perusing over the heating allowance, I had my eureka moment and realised that it is not going to be a means-tested payment at all, as it becomes plainly obvious the benchmark of entitlement is going to be pension credit.

Although hundreds of thousands of pensioners already denied the 'free television' licence are now going to have their pension reduced by up to as much as £6 per week.

So what else is in Pandora's box for the pensioner, as you start to get the feeling that we are not being told the rest of the package. And pensioners are going to be hit with double whammies from all directions once the votes have been counted. I always argued that the heating allowance should have been built into the basic rate of pension, and as it wasn't it could always be snatched back.

The last woman we had in number ten was 'Maggie the milk snatcher' now it seems we have another one 'Tessa the pension thief'.

S T VAUGHAN
Yardley Wood

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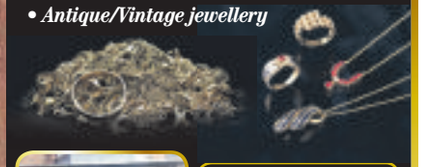

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Same gang thought to be carrying out raids while residents sleep

Families urged to install CCTV after burglars target estate

FAMILIES on a burglary-plagued estate are being urged to install CCTV by police to try and catch out crooks. The early hours raids in Wednesbury are believed to be down to the same gang getting into homes through windows or doors – even while residents are asleep upstairs.

Police have now asked people living on the Wednesbury estate to look at installing CCTV systems – costing hundreds of pounds – to keep their homes safe. The raiders have struck in Woden Road North, Old Park Road, Elm Avenue and Hawthorn Road.

The four roads are within a short distance of each other near Old Park Primary School in King's Hill. Patrols have been stepped up in the area and West Midlands Police has launched an investigation in a bid to catch the burglars.

The force has also advised residents to take action of their own.

Windows

Samantha Price-Hunt, a Sandwell PCSO, said: "We have received a number of burglary reports in the Wednesbury North area.

"Please lock doors and windows with suitable locks. Do not leave a window open if you are not able to watch it, especially if it is downstairs. Many burglaries occur as a result of open and insecure windows.

"The same applies to doors – many burglaries occur when entry is gained via an open back door and even via open front doors.

"Consider how to prevent access to your rear garden. If they cannot get into the garden, then they cannot get to the rear of the house easily. Consider installing a CCTV system or alarm. Investigations are ongoing and officers are on active patrols in the area, if you see any suspicious activity please call police on 101."

Report by Alex Ross

Homes in Woden Road North and Old Park Road were the first to be targeted, between 9pm and 5.30am on Thursday May 18. Cash, a handbag, ring and watch were snatched.

The following night, properties were then hit in Elm Avenue and Hawthorn Road between 3am and 3.30am. This time, two purses, a handbag and mobile phone were stolen.

Wednesbury North councillor Tony Meehan said: "I would encourage people to do what they can to prevent it. If they can afford CCTV it is something to think about but it has to be within their budget.

"It is a pity there are too many houses for the council to do anything about it. To be burgled when you are in bed at night must be terrifying."

A football fan's point of view at Brum rep

Dave Heeley, and friends, who regularly raises funds for the Albion Foundation

STORIES from Baggies, Blues and Villa fans will feature in a new show.

The drama of theatre meets the thrill of football in 'Stadium', which is heading to a West Midlands theatre.

The show features real stories and memories from fans from across the Midlands footballing spectrum – with their unconditional love for their teams coming under the spotlight.

Stadium features interviews and insights, music and songs from fans and inspirational supporters. Among the highlights are a bagpiper who has played at hundreds of matches to fundraising legend and Baggies fan Blind Dave Heeley, and the bride who got married in the colours of her beloved Blues to the Villa Rockets Powerchair football team.

The show runs at Birmingham's Repertory Theature from June 9 to 17.

Director and creator Mohamed El Khatib said: "Football is a real passion of mine – I've been a fan and player since I was six. For me football is a kind of education, it brings people closer together and it's an experience full of unexpected encounters.

Five new pieces of theatre created by emerging artists with and for communities will also take place in July in Ladywood, Alum Rock, Erdington, West Bromwich and Sparkbrook. Furnace will culminate in a large scale production in 2018.

Antenatal courses are on the way

SPECIAL free antenatal courses for parents-to-be in the borough are being offered by Sandwell Public Health.

The course, which starts next month, has four sessions that will cover key information to help prepare parents for the arrival of their baby.

They will include healthy pregnancy advice, looking after the baby, information about the birth, provided by midwives, and the support available for parents to access in Sandwell.

"This will enable parents-to-be to get up-to-date information. The sessions will help to reduce the risks for infant deaths and low birth weight and help parent and baby bonding," said Jyoti Atri.

It would also give them the chance to meet the children centre staff, who will be on hand and offer support as the baby develops, she added.

Sessions start in June, and are running in four children centres at Tipton, Cape Hill, Rowley Springfield and Greets Green at different times to suit people's busy lifestyles.

Parents can attend the course with a family member, friend or birthing partner and will be given all course materials free of charge.

For more information contact Healthy Sandwell on 0800 011 4656.

Industrial site has a £2.5m price tag

A SEVEN-ACRE industrial site has been snapped up for more than £2.5 million.

The land at Bloomfield Road, Tipton, sold for the seven-figure sum after going up for auction.

The site, which is near Bloomfield Recycling and a Texaco garage, features two industrial units and is let to South Staffs Industries for the next five years. It was auctioned by Allsop on Tuesday.

Station gets green-fingered spruce-up

A BLACK Country station has been given a green-fingered transformation following its formal adoption by the community.

Smethwick Rolfe Street station was spruced up after residents joined London Midland's Adopt a Station scheme to help breathe new life into the station garden on Platform 1.

Members of the Abrahamic Foundation, staff from Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Network Rail and London Midland's Safety and Environment team came together to help the adopters give the garden a new lease of life.

After putting in new compost and installing a membrane and bark, the team planted a selection of flowering evergreen shrubs, along with herbs to attract pollinators and bring new colour to the station.

The station adoption team was also assisted by volunteers and staff from BITA Pathways Park Lane Garden Centre, a social enterprise offering horticultural training, volunteering and employment opportunities for people experiencing mental ill health.

The new adopters were presented with a special station adoption plaque by Steve Fisher, head of regional services at London Midland, who said: "We're constantly on the lookout for new ways to get closer to the communities we serve. It was inspiring to see so many different groups keen to come together and give something back to their local station."

The adoption group at Smethwick Rolfe Street station with the new plaque

The gardening expert on the new Smethwick Rolfe Street adoption team is Janet Cartwright, the first ever female gardener to be recruited by Smethwick Parks back in the 1960s.

Smethwick Rolfe Street adoption is one of three of community partnership regeneration projects for the station, which also includes a community mural and a station project exhibition and meeting room.

This is being developed by students from Sandwell College as part of BTEC Art study and work experience and is set for launch during June.

Libraries volunteers plea

PEOPLE are being urged to get involved in the work at local libraries as part of National Volunteers' Week effort to get more people interested in volunteering.

The initiative which runs all this week, spotlights volunteering opportunities nationwide.

And library bosses in Sandwell are hoping that local people may realise that it can be worthwhile and satisfying to help at their local library.

Robert Hazel, community library manager, said: "With busy lives, it can be hard to find the time to volunteer but there are many benefits to volunteering not only for you, your family and your community

"Every Sandwell library welcomes volunteers and greatly values the time and skills that our volunteers give. We need volunteers to help us build services which are relevant, innovative and respond to the needs of the local area. Volunteering is fun, rewarding and it changes lives so why not come and experience it at your local library!"

Mr Hazel said the libraries were looking for people from all walks of life to help them to deliver its service.

People wishing to volunteer can fill in the online form at www.sandwell.gov.uk/libraries or call 0121 569 4911.

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Most dangerous jobs are revealed

Figures have revealed there were 67 workplace deaths in the West Midlands over five years. TOM OAKLEY looks at some of the most risky occupations

When the majority of us go to work, the most we have to worry about is getting there on time and meeting targets.

But for others, it's not just a case of heading to the office and sitting behind a desk.

In the West Midlands, figures show that the most injuries take place in agriculture, construction and manufacturing. But workers can face danger in all manner of tasks, such as taking to the road in an HGV, climbing up the side of high-rise sky-scraper to clean the windows, or courageously battling fires to save lives.

There were 621,000 workplace injuries in Britain in 2015/16 – including 144 deaths.

Across the West Midlands, figures collated by the Health and Safety Executive show that between 2011 and 2016, there were 67 fatal injuries in the workplace.

Heartbreak

Meanwhile, in 2015/16, a total of 7,019 people reported non-fatal injuries in the workplace in the region.

This included 2,585 across the Black Country and Birmingham, 1,420 in Staffordshire and 652 in Shropshire.

The HSE reported 559 non-fatal injuries in the manufacturing industry in 2015/16 across Staffordshire and the Black Country, as well as 98 in construction.

Following the release of the statistics Martin Temple, chair of the HSE said: "One death at work, or a life needlessly shortened, is one too many, and behind every statistic lies a real story of loss and heartbreak and families left to grieve. Britain has one of the best health and safety systems in the world but we should always be looking to improve and to prevent incidents that cost lives.

"This year HSE travelled the country asking industry representatives, employers, unions, workers and others what they could do to help GB work well.

"The response was hugely encouraging and I would like to ask people to deliver on the commitments made, which will help keep Britain's workers alive."

In the UK, the long-term trend has seen fatalities more than halve over the last 20 years but the most recent figures (144) have increased from 142 in 2014/5. The biggest killer nationally last year was the construction industry, with 43 workers dying.

Farmer

Rod MacBean big animals are a risk

ROD MacBean, who keeps Brockhurst Farm in Aston near Wem, Shropshire, says he is not surprised farming is rated as one of the most dangerous jobs in Britain. "You are working with big machinery and big animals," he says. "Several people have been attacked by bulls. You are also using big pieces of equipment which are very heavy and very powerful."

Mr McBean, who has been a full-time farmer for more than 20 years, says the pressures farmers have been under in recent years has also taken its toll, forcing them to work extremely long hours. "Due to the lack of money in the industry, a lot of machines are very poorly maintained, or should have been replaced several years ago," he says.

Firefighters

'Operations are often dangerous'

TIM Hyde, firefighter and director of response at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue says years ago being a firefighter would have been one of the most dangerous jobs in the country. But thanks to huge improvements to equipment, protective clothing and breathing apparatus – along with learning from past operations – techniques have been shaped, which means it's much safer.

He said:"Fire and Rescue operations are often in dangerous environments which health and safety guidance would in normal circumstances require workers to avoid. For obvious reasons, firefighters have to enter such environments so We adopt the 'safe person concept' whereby firefighters are given the training."

Road worker

LES Bramwell works on the roads in Staffordshire. He was assessing the roads as part of his day-to-day duties when he was struck by a car.

The 65 year old, from Penkridge, was walking along the pavement after routinely assessing repairs to a pothole on the A50 near Stoke-on-Trent when he was struck by a car last April. He broke his neck and leg in three different places. It was a miracle he wasn't killed.

Since then, he has highlighted the dangers of working on the region's roads. "I want to highlight to people the dangers of our job," he said.

"Something that should have been a routine task has had a serious impact on my life. That's why it's so important we educate motorists about the dangers of the work we do day in, day out."

Over the past 10 years, Highways England have reported that workers have been injured by motorists on more than 50 occasions. Seventeen of those incidents involved workers on foot.

Les suffered serious injuries after being hit by a car

High-rise window cleaners

MANY of us suffer from acrophobia – more commonly known as being terrified of heights.

If climbing up the loft ladder is a step too far, imagine what its like abseiling hundreds of feet up the side of a building on a daily basis. High-rise window cleaners take to the skies to get to those windows that cannot be reached with a step ladder and bucket.

From cleaning the metal dishes on the Bullring in Birmingham to scaling the heights of Wolverhampton University – it is certainly appears to be one of the most terrifying.

The skilled workers take precautionary tests to ensure their work is safe and secure at all times.

Abseiling down Selfridges at the Bull Ring in Brum

Meanwhile, Statistics show that the motor industry is one of the most dangerous occupations in Britain. Figures from the Health and Safety Executive reveal a total of 67 people suffered fatal injuries at work over a 10-year period up until 2012.

In 2012/13, eight people in the vehicle repair industry were killed, and 300 more suffered serious injuries.

Truck driver

JIM Rushton says too many vehicles on the roads, an increase in the number of drivers from less-developed countries and the fear of stowaways while waiting for ferries makes being a lorry driver one of the most difficult jobs around.

"It's very dangerous," says the 62-year-old from Tweedale, Telford, who first became a lorry driver in 1974. "It's getting worse and worse every day. It's quite difficult on the roads." He says overseas drivers operating in UK roads in recent years has increased sharply, and the standard of driving varies greatly.

"There are too many vehicles on the roads, that is the biggest danger," he says. "We also work long hours."

Mr Rushton discovered another dangerous side to the job when he tried to board a ferry in Calais last year – five illegal immigrants who tried to stowaway in his truck. "When you park up overnight over there, you wonder whether somebody will get in," he says.

Too many vehicles on the road, and long hours

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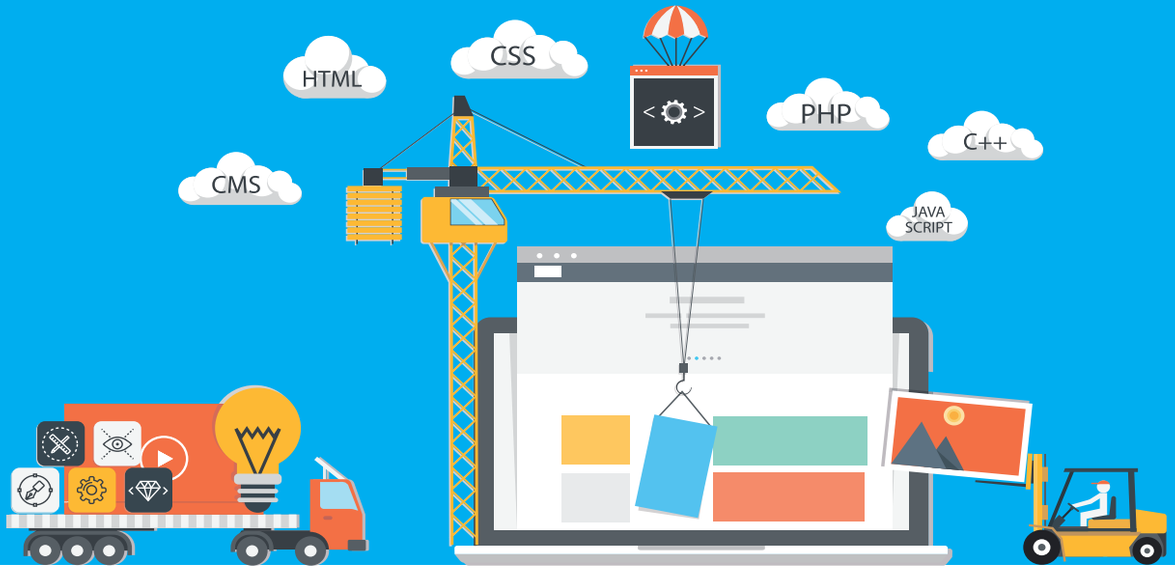

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Kiss bring the house down and offer tribute

THEY may not be known for their sentimentality but classic rockers Kiss paid a touching tribute to the victims of the Manchester tragedy during show in Birmingham.

The American rockers took to the stage at the city's Barclaycard Arena on Sunday evening, where they led a minute's silence in memory of those who died in the horrific attack at Ariana Grande's concert at the Manchester Arena on May 22.

After just two songs, the band called for the crowd to pay their respects through silence in a show of solidarity and defiance against the terrorist attack which targeted young music fans enjoying a live show and has also forced Kiss to cancel a planned performance at the arena.

The band released a statement following the attack saying that they were 'heartbroken' by what had happened and pulled the show, leaving just stops in Birmingham and London to complete on their tour.

Harley Giles from Stafford

Robert and Jessica Stocker of Telford

John Holland, Lenka Belcakova and family from Albrighton. Pictures: Andy Shaw

Energy

Aside from the touching tribute, Kiss brought their usual mix of theatrical escapism, high octane rock and roll and communal joy to a gloomy evening in the West Midlands.

Hits performed on the night included Shock Me, Crazy Crazy Nights and Detroit Rock City.

Original band members Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley rolled back the years with a performance high on energy and spirit, while the band used the entirety of the venue to show off in true Kiss style.

Guitar solos were played high above the crowd on hydraulic platforms while pyrotechnics shot from all corners of the room to liven up those huge choruses which have kept the band in people's minds after all these years.

At the peak of the evening, 67 year old Simmons flew over the crowd via zipwire in a dare-devil stunt that most people half his age wouldn't wish to attempt.

As is usually the case with most hard rock bands who visit the city from America, Kiss saw the show as an opportunity to pay tribute to Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, two bands with links the region who have influenced so many after them.

Paul Stanley told the crowd how much the music of Robert Plant and Ozzy Osbourne's bands had impacted him, adding that he used to dream of coming to England after hearing their songs.

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Suction cup dentures

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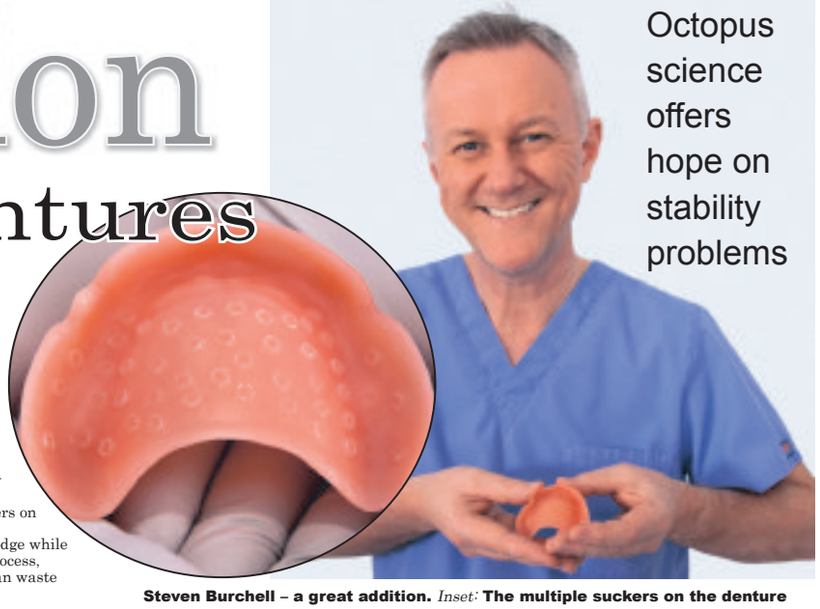

Steven Burchell – a great addition. *Inset:* **The multiple suckers on the denture**

IT'S BEING heralded as a "revolution in denture stability" and has caught the attention of the British Dental Journal as the latest non-invasive therapy to help secure oral prosthetics.

The Suction Cup option, which borrows its science from the octopus, is the latest hot news in denture provision and is available at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.

Esentially, the therapy which involves the manufacture of tiny suckers on the prescription, targets those patients with flat gums.

For these people their dentures are often unstable and prone to dislodge while eating, laughing and talking. Often the result of the natural ageing process, the normally raised gum profile that remains after tooth extraction, can waste away as the bone beneath slowly erodes.

A happy clinical solution in these cases presents major challenges in the denture prescribing process and often stabilisation can only be guaranteed by clipping the denture onto implants.

But the Suction Cup System (not to be confused with suction valve dentures) offers another possible stabilisation method. Like the octopus, the many soft suckers (cups) combine to help create adhesion.

Using a soft silicone, micro suckers are manufactured into a traditional-looking prescription and can benefit upper and lower teeth. In terms of clinical management, the therapy allows a properly targeted proposition, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. For the tens of thousands of people whose spontaneous living is forever compromised by poorly functioning dentures that tilt, slip and slide, the Suction Cup System delivers a choice without surgery for suitable candidates.

Sucking vacuum

California devlopers TCS claim the product is a "revolution in denture stability", reviving a system first pateneted more than 100 years ago. A clear indicator of whether dentures fit correctly is the amount of fixative used, how many times it is neccessary to reapply, and critically, whether you have confidence in your teeth.

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng), principal of the clinic which continues to attract patients from all over the UK and beyond, says: "We have tooled up for this new process and it's a great addition to a wide range of solutions already available.

"It's a much-needed new, non-invasive alternative for denture wearers, who present every week with examples of how ill-fitting prosthetics have stopped them eating properly, eroded self-confidence and taken away the spontaneity of normal life.

"The common problem is that the vital oral structures for normal denture retention have been lost and for those people these so-called 'octopus dentures' may offer a solution."

How does it work? A soft silicone reline material is used to craft the cups and under bite pressure a stabilising sucking vacuum is created to help hold the dentures against the soft tissues of the mouth.

Want to know more? Book in for a complimentary first consultation with Steven and see if it will work for you.

Predictably reassuring

What the patients say

Every member of staff was lovely and so easy to talk to. They were all so very kind and the care was excellent.
– *Jacqueline Turgoose*

Steven's demeanour and attitude to it all gave me the confidence and assurance that they could resolve my problem.
– *Norma Aston*

When I first saw my teeth I thought they looked just like my real teeth. My husband couldn't believe they were so good.
– *Viki Ball*

Going to the dentist has never been so good and I am over the moon with the results. Bring on the steaks!
– *Lewis Carrington*

I couldn't ask for more. My teeth have at least three gradients of colour and the match is absolutely perfect.
– *Esther Nash*

I'm a hard person to please, but it was so obvious Steven has a great team and the experience was faultless.
– *Andy Page*

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The Cold War comes to Tettenhall

John Richards scores the winner

Wolves supporters enjoying the game despite the weather

How we braved Cold to support our team

A grim Erfurt street from the hotel window

IN November 1971 a small band of Wolves supporters braved the weather and the East German border guards to venture behind the Iron Curtain.

We were there to support our team against F C Carl Zeiss Jena in the third round of the UEFA Cup, first leg. We flew from Birmingham to Nuremburg Airport in West Germany, and were then taken by coach into the East.

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

In took only 10 minutes to pass through the heavily-armed border on the way in, but was to take more than two hours to get out, as every nook and cranny on the coaches were searched, and everyone on board checked carefully.

We stayed the night in the town of Erfurt, and found some solace in a grim bar, the experience made worse by the icy weather. When we arrived in Jena for the match, we found a small, largely open stadium, and had to brush 4in of snow off the plain benches to sit down. At least the result was enjoyable as John Richards slotted the only goal.

It had been an afternoon match as the stadium had no floodlights, and we returned to West Germany after the game for the flight home.

A taste of the old Cold War Iron Curtain was brought to Tettenhall Station last month when East German and Russian Cold War re-enactors set up a 'border post' and were faced by American and British Army of the Rhine re-enactors.

Try as they might to be grim and forbidding, a pleasant spring day in the Smestow Valley, could hardly compare to a bleak, snowy, border post, in the centre of Europe, where NATO and the Warsaw Pact were eyeball-to-eyeball, and the Cold War might have become Hot, at any moment.

The snowy view from the benches

East German re-enactors try to look grim in Tettenhall

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WOLVERHAMPTON MAGAZINE

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The spokesman added: "Just like the rest of your home, over time, algae and dirt will rapidly build and leave your conservatory looking not only green but very unclean.

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The cost of cleaning your guttering yourself will surprise you. Scaffolding and ladder costs alone are at a premium and then there's the obvious dangers with health and safety, especially if you have small children!

And of course, cleaning any kind of block paving or patio is no easy task.

"We've all been there on a spring morning, hard brush in hand and a bucket of detergent," said the company spokesman.

"After spending hours working on those tough and unruly stains can you really tell if you've even touched the surface? Probably not.

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Express & Star

More picture clues to Black Country's past

LOCAL author and historian Terry Price is issuing another plea to help establish details of two more old pictures he has come across during his research.

Firstly he has got hold of a photograph which shows a children's Queen Elizabeth II coronation day party on June 2, 1953.

Terry explains: "It appears to be taking place on the upper floor of a church hall, schoolroom, or community centre, judging by the roofing structure either side of the picture.

"Note the 'Brooke Bond Tea' party hats being worn. This photograph is thought to have been taken in the hall end area of West Bromwich."

Meanwhile, the other picture is said to have been taken at an outdoor venue in West Bromwich probably during the 1950s.

Terry says: "It appears to show children from the audience taking part in some sort of talent contest conducted by Pierrot's.

"Dartmouth Park has been suggested as the venue but this has since proven not to be the case. The stage frontage of the old 'Hollywood Bowl' bandstand in the park looked completely different to this one."

Anyone who thinks they might be able to help solve the mystery of these pictures is asked to get in touch with Terry on 01922 635891.

The Chronicle will update readers on progress of any information which comes forward in future editions.

Balloons and party hats at the ready for the Queen's coronation party in 1953 with several youngsters and their parents getting ready to tuck into some treats

The talent contest which it has been thought might have been taking place in Dartmouth Park sometime during the 1950s.

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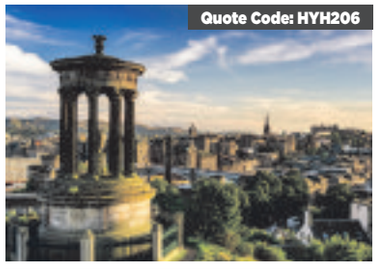

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Hospital to get more parking and a new access route

CANNOCK Chase Hospital will soon have more parking and a new access route after plans were approved.

The district's hospital, off Brunswick Road, has seen its plans for more staff parking and an access route onto the A34 Stafford Road approved by planning chiefs. The hospital will add 11 new parking spaces in total, while the Stafford Road access will only be for staff and will come from the south-west corner of the hospital site.

Councillor George Adamson, the leader of Cannock Chase District Council, said the plans were welcome and would hopefully alleviate some of the pressure on Brunswick Road. "It will obviously be welcomed.

"Residents in Brunswick Road are concerned about the amount of parking that way so hopefully this will get them off that road.

"It definitely makes sense to have the Stafford Road access. Brunswick Road is congested at the best of times so this is an excellent idea to help relieve that."

Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, submitted the plans to Cannock Chase District Council. A report, prepared by Dudley-based Central Design Consultants on behalf of the trust, said: "The site extends is located within the South-Western corner of the Cannock Chase Hospital site and currently comprises an un-surfaced vehicle turning and undefined car parking area.

"In addition there are two hinged barriers providing access to and from Stafford Road (A34), which are currently used (maximum once a month) by HGV's delivering medical gas as a route to exit the site due to insufficient space on site to turn around and exit onto Brunswick Road.

"This application is to provide a controlled exit from the site which will enable the implementation of a one way traffic route for staff vehicles through the Western side of the hospital site."

Tiffany lights up stage at venue

Eighties pop star Tiffany wows the Cannock crowd after two nights at the Bar Sport venue in the town

SHE is best known for her 1987 number one hit I Think We're Alone Now – but pop star Tiffany swapped America to perform at a Cannock bar.

The throwback teen icon, now 45, flocked to Bar Sport on Friday and Saturday night to perform two shows at the town centre venue. Her adoring fans came from as far as Scotland – and saw her wow the audience with classics and covers.

The gigs kicked off the two-month Forest Fringe festival, which aims to give local venues and artists an opportunity to collaborate and promote events.

Scott Murray, owner of Bar Sport, said both evenings were 'better than we'd ever expected'.

Another special event will close the festival when local rock legend Glenn Hughes of Deep Purple and Trapeze fame takes to the stage.

Walkers support NHS

A 180-MILE pilgrimage of prayer for the NHS set off from Staffordshire with the aim of visiting 16 hospitals in 10 days, including Walsall Manor.

The NHS Prayer Walk, led by Stafford curate the Rev Becky Richards, it is timed to coincide with global prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come from May 25 to June 4. She said: "This is primarily a Pilgrimage of Prayer for our NHS and the thousands of health care workers who work under increasing pressures and rising expectations. The walk is not a political demonstration, but a move of prayer, recognising God's heart for the National Health Service."

The Bishop of Stafford, the Right Rev Geoff Annas, joined the pilgrims for morning worship at County Hospital before walking the first leg to Cannock Hospital. There, the Bishop of Lichfield, the Right Rev Dr Michael Ipgrave, met walkers and prayed with staff outside the hospital before journeying to Walsall's Manor Hospital.

Bishop Michael said: "The terrible events in Manchester underline the tremendous importance of our doctors, nurses and other NHS staff. Walking alongside each other in pilgrimage is crucial to building relationships and faith. It was a privilege to spend time with Becky and others on their first day."

From Walsall, the pilgrims were travelling to Birmingham City Hospital and Solihull. They are due to finish at St Thomas's Hospital in London on Saturday. More information is available at www.nhsprayerwalk.co.uk and at nhsprayerwalk.blogspot.co.uk

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Artist's first UK show

THE first UK exhibition by leading contemporary Czech artist Pavel Brázda is taking place in the West Midlands.

The event – Pavel Brázda is Here – organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Birmingham City Council and the Ikon Gallery – opened on Thursday and runs throughout the month. The exhibition features works from the artist's colourful Human Comedy cycle, in celebration of a career which spans more than seven decades.

Pavel said: "This series is structured into individual chapters. It all begins with birth and youth."

Care home opens up to show off new £1m improvements

Newbury Manor, set for an open day

A £1 million development to add 12 new beds and additional "home-from-home comforts" to an Oldbury care centre is opening to the public next week.

It is part of the National Care Homes Open Day celebrations which are getting into full swing.

The investment at the family-run Newbury Manor in Newbury Lane will create up to 20 jobs and takes the bed capacity to 56. The new wing also includes two extra lounges – one a quiet area, TV leisure suite with Wi-Fi, hairdressing and beauty salon, landscaped garden and additional outdoor seating areas and landscaping within the grounds.

Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Ahmadul Haque MBE will be joining in the opening of the facilities on June 10. The open day starting at 11am as part of a national initiative involving thousands of care homes across the UK to showcase care excellence to local communities.

The Newbury Manor open day will offer a relaxed environment where those seeking residential or nursing care for loved-ones can see what's on offer in a day-to-day working environment.

Manager, Diane Williams can be contacted on 0121 532 1632. Email – newburymanor@btconnect.com and website – www.newburymanor-home.co.uk

Film set to Phil us in on rocker

A DOCUMENTARY is to be made charting the rise to fame of Black Country-born rock icon Phil Lynott. Six-time Oscar nominee Jim Sheridan and award-winning documentary maker Colm Quinn are working together on the project exploring the life of the Thin Lizzy frontman, who was born in West Bromwich before moving to Ireland.

Phil Lynott

Auditions for the role of Lynott, who died aged just 36 in 1986, took place in Dublin at the weekend. Although billed as a documentary, Mr Sheridan has described the work as a 'non-fiction movie'.

Lynott fronted several bands such as Skid Row before learning the bass guitar and forming Thin Lizzy in 1969.

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Cone along to find gnome from gnomes

Jake Burden, 12, from Kingswinford, at the Red House

CHILDREN have been putting their detective skills to the test at a popular attraction.

Families have been flocking to the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley to take part in a free gnomes and fairies trail.

The trail, which runs throughout half term and finishes on June 3, is the first of its kind at the attraction on High Street.

The free event allows youngsters to explore the site and hunt down the gnomes which are hidden around.

Lying in the heart of the Stourbridge glassmaking industry, the Red House Glass Cone was built at the end of the 18th century and continued to product glasswares until 1936. It is the only complete glass cone in the area and one of only four left in the UK.

Families have a chance to have a go at the gnome and fairy trail until June 3.

Youngsters can also have a go at a number of different crafts and watch glass blowing. Charge for crafts is £2.50.

Throughout half term, there also two bookable glass fusion sessions available allowing children aged five and over to make their very own magical designs in glass.

Bookings can be made by calling 01384 815571.

For more information, visit www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums.

Conservatoire will host music contest

A NEW music venue has been announced as the venue for the BBC Young Musician competition in 2018, as the contest prepares to celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Following the regional auditions later this year, Birmingham Conservatoire will host the Category Finals between March 16 and 20 in 2018, alongside the semi final on March 23. All performances in Birmingham will be recorded for broadcast on BBC Four. BBC Young Musician is a part of the BBC's ongoing commitment to supporting and providing a platform for new and emerging talent. Musicians are judged in five categories ahead of the semi final; strings, keyboard, woodwind, percussion and brass.

Birmingham Conservatoire's new £57 million home, opening in the Eastside region of the city in September this year, will also welcome the BBC Young Musician Jazz Award Final in 2018.

Launched three years ago, the BBC Young Musician Jazz Award runs alongside the established classical music format and aims to showcase another group of exceptional young musicians to audiences across the UK.

Diabetes doc strikes the right chord as a singer

BY day he's one of the leading diabetes consultants in the country helping patients to fight the disease – but at night Dr Parijat De comes alive on stage to sing Bollywood classics.

The medic's work at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust earned him national recognition after being named Diabetes Healthcare Professional of the Year at the National Quality in Care Awards last year.

But he's also gaining attention globally for another reason – his voice. Dr De is a regular on the singing circuit, performing at charity events, festivals, weddings, and parties not only in the UK, but also in Norway and India.

"I'm actually a professional Bollywood singer as well," he revealed. "Some people are surprised when they hear what I do. I travel across the country and perform. It's a great joy and a distraction. I love doing this for the community.

Charitable

"It's been a passion of mine from my college days and I have produced 3 CDs to date which people have bought."

Dr De has managed to combine both his passion for his singing and diabetes by raising funds for Diabetes UK over the years through performances at charitable events. My patients are my inspiration," he said.

"When I see them trying every day to lead a normal life despite their chronic debilitating condition, I feel that I need to work harder to help them enjoy their life more fully."

Since joining the Trust in 2003, Dr De has led a long list of innovative projects to improve the standard of care for patients. He has developed simple and effective tools to help doctors and nurses deliver safe and efficient diabetes care for admitted patients in the hospital that has has improved patient satisfaction and reduced unnecessary length of stays.

And he's the main force and inspiration behind the community diabetes project DiCE, in collaboration with Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (SWB CCG), to provide care to diabetes patients closer to home. This has become a national award-winning service model and is being replicated in other parts of the country.

He explained: "What we do is we deliver a community diabetes service in all the 89 practices across the borough. We named this model, DiCE – Diabetes in Community Extension, which sees us working closely with GPs in treating patients. This approach has been working very well and it has seen improvement in patients' managing their own condition. GPs have also benefitted from this programme as we give them training and they have become more skilful and confident in treating patients."

Despite the recognition for his hard and the award, Dr De remains modest: "Being recognised for such a prestigious national award is my most humbling and biggest career achievement so far." He was also named as the Diabetes UK Clinical Champion in 2016, a role that would allow him to use his influence to improve education and patient safety standards across the trust. He added: "Fortunately, I have a very supportive and a dedicated team of nurses and doctors."

Although his work schedule can be very busy most of the time, Dr De still makes time to play tennis, badminton, and table tennis. He represents the Bournville club in the Birmingham table tennis premiership league for amateur players, something that keeps him literally on his toes.

NHS HEROES

ONCE again we focus some of our time on the quiet heroes of the NHS, from a wide variety of backgrounds doing a wide variety of jobs.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is one of the Black Country's largest NHS organisations.

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This week we highlight:
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SPRINKLE GELATO PERFECT PLACE TO COOL DOWN IN THE SUMMER

Shoppers will be able to cool off in style this summer, at the celebrated dessert parlour Sprinkles Gelato at New Square Shopping Centre.

The store offers delectable range of 44+ flavours of traditional Italian gelato, including Eton Mess, Raspberry Peanut Crunch and Blue Banana. As well as a taste-bud tempting selection of waffles, shakes, crepes, sundaes and firm favorites Cookie Dough. It's also known for its wide range of vegan friendly dairy free sorbet range which features flavours including Forest Fruits, Mango, Pineapple, Watermelon and Red Orange.

You can also cool down with a range of milkshakes and cold drinks and if the weather turns cold don't worry they also do hot drinks.

Sprinkles Gelato is a family owned business that opened its first store in Portswood, Southampton in September 2012 and since then has grown to 15 stores. Its celebrated gelato is made to traditional Italian recipes at its Southampton headquarters. In addition to the New Square store the business has other outlets in Southampton, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Winton, London, Brighton, Coventry, Poole and Basildon.

Ibrahim Ahmed, Operational Director at Sprinkles Gelato adds "We are delighted with the customer base we have attracted in Westbromwich since we opened our doors in March but we want to reach out to the wider Westbromwich and surrounding areas, so come along for a treat at our dessert parlour".

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Children visit care home for tea party

SCHOOL pupils enjoyed an afternoon with elderly people to mark Dementia Awareness Week. The Vintage Tea Party, funded with nearly £2,000 from The Big Lottery Fund's Celebrate Programme, was organised to bring the whole community together to raise awareness of the issues related to dementia.

Twenty Year 7 students from Grace Academy Darlaston visited Moxley Court in Wednesbury.

During the day the residents were treated to entertainment from the Moorcroft Primary School choir, along with playing games with students from Grace Academy who also helped to serve food and drink at the event.

Dementia care manager Angela Causton from Accord, said: "Dementia is a disease that doesn't just affect older people, so it is vital that we raise awareness. For younger people living with dementia under the age of 65 there is very little help in the Walsall area, so we have now set up a working-age support group organised by Pathways 4 Life."

Andrew Reilly, head of year seven at the academy, said: "Students who are better socially adapted, tend to do better academically, with less instances of exam anxiety. It also helps them to be more aware of the important issues in our community."

Major transport interchange in the pipeline as part of metro

A NEW transport interchange for metro, rail and bus services could be built at Dudley Port, which would link up with Wednesbury.

The plans were revealed in a new public consultation launched by Sandwell Council over how it could improve the area. The Midland Metro, which is set to run between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill on a new line, would stop at the existing Dudley Port train station.

By Jamie Brassington

Council bosses said the metro line would 'open up Dudley Port for regeneration'. Bus stops would be moved closer to the main entrance of the interchange 'to improve connectivity' with metro and rail services, the report said.

The interchange would combine the metro and rail line, with trams and trains stopping at the station. It would feature a new waiting area, ticket office and cycle parking for passengers.

Meanwhile access for pedestrians would be improved with signs and maps.

Council bosses approved for the launch of the public consultation called the 'supplementary planning document' at the latest cabinet metting.

Councillor Paul Moore, cabinet member for regeneration and economic investment, said: "The report is to consolidate the plans. The extension of the metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill will open up Dudley Port as part of a regeneration corridor.

"The interchange could be built, but that is banking on the metro being developed which is almost a reality."

Councillor Moore said the cost of the metro project runs into 'hundreds of millions of pounds'.

He said the metro line would provide improvements to transport links, enable new housing and other development. "You only have to look at the extension of the metro in Birmingham by three or four stops," he said. "That made the number of people using it dramatically increase."

The metro line from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill - running through Dudley Port and Dudley - will be built on the former South Staffordshire Railway line.

Sword in the cake, for Arthurian themed event

Mayor Ahmadul Haque with store manager Rob Harrison and Catherine Melnik from the museum

A HUGE King Arthur cake was donated to Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery.

The cake was given to the museum by Oak Furniture Land to mark the grand opening of its first store in Wednesbury.

Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Ahmadul Haque was present as the new store manager Rob Harrison presented the Museum with at the cake.

The new 18,700 sq.ft store is located at the Gallagher Retail Park and has created seven jobs.

Catherine Melnik of Wednesbury Museum Art Gallery said: "We were thrilled to take part in the official opening of the new Oak Furniture Land store.

"The cake donation is a wonderful gesture to support our Tales of King Arthur Spring half-term event which is taking place at the Museum on Wednesday May 31 and Thursday June 1 from 11am to 3pm."

Entry on both days is free with charges for crafts from 50p to £2. Contact the gallery on 0121 556 0683.

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Les keeps it in the Addams Family!

Blimey. Where should we start? How about the bald head or the meltdown on Celebrity Big Brother? Or there was the bum-out-for-Ricky Gervais scene, on Extras, and the painful breakdown of his marriage to Amanda Holden.

Then there were the high times, the successful appearance on New Faces, the brilliant and well-remunerated 15-year stint as presenter on Family Fortunes and, more recently, the two year stint as Michael Rodwell in Coronation Street.

It's been quite a 63 years, for the ginger fella from Garston, near Liverpool. So tell us, Les, where do we start?

"The Addams family," he says. Ah yes, he's featuring in the musical comedy that's been successfully touring the UK and reaches Birmingham's Hippodrome on Tuesday, running until June 10. Les plays Uncle Hester, alongside Samantha Womack, as Moricia and Carrie Hope Fletcher as Wednesday.

Except Les didn't do the usual round of interviews to promote the work. Hell, no. Instead, he went on Loose Women and shaved his head. As you do.

"Before you called, I was giving it the once over with my Gillette," he says. "I tried the wig and it wasn't going to work eights times a week with the sweat and glue. So I shaved my head for charity and we did it on Loose Women.

"I wear a cap if it's cold but I've got used to going out without it now. I get recognised a bit, though mostly people look sympathetically and think I might be ill. But I'm privileged, I haven't lost my hair as some people sadly do. And the money we raised from the head shave has gone to a breast cancer charity."

He is lovely but unmistakably nuts. Les is one of the most pleasant, most open and most honest fellas in showbusiness. He's climbed to the top of the mountain – 15 years hosting Family Fortunes made him a household name – and he's been in the depths of despair.

And though there's no second guessing the thrice-married father-of-three, who became a dad for the third time at 57, one thing is for certain: he'll continue to surprise us. That constant process of reinvention is what's kept him in the nation's consciousness for so many years.

"I've made a conscious decision to keep moving and keep reinventing," he says. "If you stay where you are, you stagnate. If I was hoping to do variety shows like I did at the Alex, in Birmingham, all those years ago then my days of work would be few and far between.

"You have to diversify and play different characters so that you can keep going as long as you like. You have to keep surprising people. The Guardian put The Addams Family in their 'Top Picks'. They said: 'The long and strange career of Les Dennis takes another turn'. I took that as a compliment. Nobody can second guess what I'll do next, me included. I don't have a plan. If somebody comes up with a good idea, I'll do it."

But doesn't some stuff do more harm than good? The Celebrity Big Brother appearance, for instance, when his marriage to Amanda Holden was on the rocks two years after her affair with Neil Morrissey. He doesn't dodge the question.

"Big Brother wasn't my finest hour but I came second. I was confused by what was happening. But then people say do you regret it? And I answer that if I hadn't done that then Ricky Gervais wouldn't have called me and he gave me the chance to redeem myself on Extras."

Black humour – Les stars as Uncle Fester in the Addams Family

And Les was brilliant in Extras – he smashed it out of the park in one of his funniest and probably-most-authentic roles.

"Ricky was brilliant to work with. I'm sitting in the dressing room where we filmed extras at Wimbledon right now. I've got great fond memories of working on that and the special. Ricky's great. When you work with him, you get it done and then you have a laugh. I'd work with him again, like a shot."

The strange twists and turns are unfathomable – though it was ever thus. From the an early run of comedy TV shows including New Faces, Russ Abbot's Madhouse and The Russ Abbot Show, there have been unlikely roles in Merseybeat, Casualty, Crossroads and Family Affairs, not forgetting Brookside. There there's been The Bill, Hotel Babylon and Celebrity Masterchef. His agent must have a field day.

"Well it was my agent who came up with this. After leaving Corrie, my agent asked if I wanted to see the producers of The Addams Family. I knew the show had been a big hit in the New York and people were waiting for it to come over. We are the first UK cast, so we got to originate this version of it.

"The whole point is that the audience has to work out who is normal and who isn't. That's the thing. At one stage, Grandma says 'define normal'. And she's so right because every family is dysfunctional in some way. Over the course of the show, you realise that The Addams Family are a totally loving and caring family." Birmingham will be a blast for the often-returning actor, who's made the city a home from home. I've spent loads of time in the city. We did Family Fortunes we started at ATV as well as New Faces, all those years ago. So I go back with Birmingham a long way. And I've worked at the Hippodrome many times. I did Hairspray with Brian Conley and a show with Su Pollard. I've done Birmingham Rep and The Alex a few times as well. The audiences in Birmingham are always absolutely delightful. They're one of the best in the country."

> *The audience has to work out who is normal and who isn't*

Les's trials and tribulations are, it seems, a long way behind him. And, while maintaining a successful and decidedly entertaining career, he's also happily married to Claire Nicholson, who he married in 2009. They love nothing more than spending time with their kids.

"I just love being a parent. It was a surprise to me to have two kids. I didn't expect it. My son Philip is 37 and my little ones Eleanor and Tom are nine and six. I adore them all. Philip is their big brother and he's great with them. I do the school run and any spare time is with the kids. Even on a tour like this, we have a lot of the dates in the summer where they come along, like Southampton, Cardiff, Dublin and Southend. They love it. I make the pancakes for them in the morning.

"They love being around the theatre and they come to the warm up and stand on the stage. They were a little scared of Lurch at first, but now they're cool."

And so, remarkably, is Les. One of the most genuine and sincere performers in the theatre, he's made a career out of left-turns, without going round in circles.

● **For more entertainment news see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

A scene from Running Wild

Jungle adventure with girl saved by an elephant

LIFE-SIZE animal puppets, akin to those created for the hit play War Horse, will feature in the the latest stage adaptation of a Michael Morpurgo novel, Running Wild, at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday (June 6-10).

Children's Touring Partnership has taken to the road with the first UK Tour of Running Wild, in an adaptation by Samuel Adamson. It's an award-winning family audience play originally produced by Regent's Park Theatre and Chichester Festival Theatre.

This epic production, complete with spectacular life-size puppets, tells an emotional story of love, loss and loyalty. It is the story of a girl named Lilly, who takes an elephant ride whilst on holiday with her mother in Indonesia. Oona, the elephant, suddenly runs from the beach into the jungle with Lilly on her back. It saves their lives, as moments later a tsunami hits the island.

Miles from civilisation, there's wonder, discovery and adventures with the orangutans, but then thoughts turn to her mother, tigers and hunger. Lilly must learn to survive in the rainforest. Then the hunters come.

Morpurgo, former children's laureate and author of War Horse, was inspired by the real-life story of Amber Owen, who was on holiday in Phuket with her mother and stepfather in 2004 when she went on an elephant ride. The eight-year-old noticed the elephant was attempting to pull away from the receding sea water. The animal ran away and thereby saved her life.

The production will work to support the Born Free Foundation's global elephant conservation projects.

Tickets are available online at grandtheatre.co.uk or by calling 01902 429212.

Pixx of the week with BRIT graduate

Look out for Pixx, she's set to be the next graduate of the BRIT School to make a big stir on the pop scene.

The Croydon school for performing arts has already produced such major talents as Amy Winehouse, Adele, Jessie J, Leona Lewis, Katie Melua, Kate Nash, Ella Eyre and Katy B.

Pixx's debut album, The Age Of Anxiety, is released tomorrow (Friday) and the 12 song collection is an impressive start featuring smart, catchy pop songs.

Pixx – the alter ego of Hannah Rodgers, pictured – also has something to sing about. Songs such as I Bow Down, Grip, Baboo and the new single Waterslides, seeks to address a generation increasingly isolated, whether it be due to the pressures of social media or political turbulence.

The Age Of Anxiety borrows its title from WH Auden's final poem, charting one man's quest to find substance and identity in a shifting and increasingly industrialised world. Published in 1947, Auden's six-part rumination on human isolation in the modern age has had a profound effect on the young singer-songwriter from Surrey.

Rodgers experienced a year-long period of insomnia caused by recurring nightmares at the age of nine. It left a lasting impression, inspiring a fascination with different states of consciousness, and she draws upon that for her album.

To celebrate the release of The Age Of Anxiety, Hannah Rodgers and her three-piece band will play six UK shows during album release week, including Birmingham venue The Hare & Hounds, in Kings Heath, on Tuesday, June 6.

Other gigs worth checking out include: YouTube vlogger and singer-songwriter Emma Blackery at the O2 Institute 2 in Birmingham on Saturday, or head across the city centre that night for a co-headline gig by The Americas and The Jackrobins, with support from Spilt Milk Society and Junior Weeb at the O2 Aacademy 3.

Brit Award nominated singer Beth Rowley is back and has a gig at Birmingham's Sunflower Lounge on Thursday, June 8.

Witch hunt drama is American classic

The awful consequences of rash retribution based on fear and hysteria is examined in Arthur Miller's powerful play, The Crucible, a landmark of American theatre.

The latest production of this classic, in which the Salem witch hunt is an allegory for McCarthyism in '50s America, will feature Charlie Condou (from Coronation Street) and Call The Midwife's Victoria Yeates (pictured). It is staged at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday. Call 0844 871 3011.

Looking for Trouble, found the right place

R&B group Vintage Trouble bring high-energy soul to The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton on Sunday. The LA-based quartet have opened shows for The Rolling Stones and The Who, and in Ty Taylor have a frontman very much in the tradition of Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett. Special guest Laurence Jones.

Black Country bluesman Ian Parker and his Band are at the Robin 2 tonight (Thursday). Other highlights at the Bilston venue include From The Jam tomorrow, and a charity gig in aid of Compton Hospice by 1960s veterans Regency Lemon on Saturday.

Another veteran of the 60s music scene, Terry Reid, plays the Robin 2 on Wednesday. According to rock folklore, Reid turned down an offer to front Led Zeppelin and recommended his pal Robert Plant instead. Special guest Nikki Rous.

SATURDAY'S TV JUNE 3

CHOICE

Peter Capaldi

Doctor Who (BBC1, 7.35pm)
The whole world has fallen under the sway of a mass delusion, and it seems only Bill Potts can see through it. Even the Doctor is unable to comprehend the truth, meaning it is up to Bill to set the record straight by persuading her friend that humanity is in deadly danger. But a Time Lord's conviction is not easily broken, and with the fate of an entire species on the line, if Bill cannot get the Doctor on-side, she may find herself forced to kill him. Sci-fi drama, with Peter Capaldi, Pearl Mackie, Matt Lucas, Emma Handy, Beatrice Curnew, Stewart Wright, Solomon Israel, Jamie Hill and Rosie Jane, with guest star Michelle Gomez.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.15 Film:** How to Train Your Dragon. (2010) Animated fantasy, with the voice of Jay Baruchel. **4.45** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.30** BBC News. **5.40** Regional Programme. **5.50 Film:** Raiders of the Lost Ark. (1981) Action adventure, starring Harrison Ford.

7.35 Doctor Who. Bill steps into the role of the hero when she discovers everyone in the world has fallen under the sway of a mass delusion, including the Doctor. Guest starring Michelle Gomez.

8.25 Casualty. Elle agrees to deliver a career talk at her son Blake's school, but her speech is derailed when she discovers some unexpected truths about her child and his friends. Luckily, Josh and Jacob are on hand to help.

9.15 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes becomes concerned when Dermot announces he wants to ask his childhood friend Buster, a known criminal, to be his best man. However, she is distracted when her neighbour Winnie's husband is rushed to hospital, leaving her son trying to raise funds for his wedding by getting embroiled in a money-making scheme. (R)

9.45 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.05 Clique. Faced with undeniable proof of the darkness at the heart of the world she and Georgia have entered, Holly faces a very real dilemma. Unable to turn to Rory for support, she instead seeks advice from a new group of friends, who conspire with her to drag the truth out into the light of day. Doing so will bring the world crashing down around those who previously thought themselves unassailable, but will also serve as a point of no return for Holly.

10.50 Clique. Holly is forced to ally herself with Rachel, and doubts every choice she has made throughout her first term as she races to bring Georgia back from the brink. Last in the series.

11.35 Film: The Spectacular Now. (2013) Drama, starring Miles Teller and Shailene Woodley.

1.05 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.45 Film: Never a Dull Moment. (1950) **8.10 Film:** Goodbye, Mr Chips. (1939) **10.00** Monty Halls' Great Hebridean Escape. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Joan Fontaine: Talking Pictures. (R) **1.30 Film:** Ivanhoe. (1952) Medieval adventure, starring Robert Taylor. **3.15** Natural World. (R) **4.00** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Gardeners' World. (R)

6.00 Film: Grow Your Own. (2007) Town residents are outraged when a refugee family is given space on their allotments to help rehabilitate a traumatised father – but both groups unite in a common cause when a mobile phone company plans to build a mast in the area. Comedy drama, starring Benedict Wong and Olivia Colman.

7.30 The Lake District: A Wild Year. For the wildlife and people who live amid the stunning scenery of the Lake District, life is one of continuous change. This documentary features cutting-edge camera techniques offering a new and unique perspective on a turbulent year in the life of England's largest national park. Time-lapse photography shows months and weeks passing in seconds – snow and ice giving way to sunshine or the frequent rain showers – while the animals, plants and people find extraordinary ways to cope with the challenges of this ancient landscape. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. Mainwaring and his platoon are put in charge of manning an observation post on a derelict pier, but they are marooned when their boat drifts away. (R)

9.00 Sgt Pepper's Musical Revolution – with Howard Goodall. The composer explores why the Beatles' 50-year-old album is still revered as an innovative, revolutionary and influential release.

10.00 Film: The Sapphires. (2012) Four Aboriginal Australian singers are propelled to stardom when they entertain American troops in the Vietnam War. Drama, starring Deborah Mailman.

11.40 Cricket: Champions Trophy Highlights.

12.30 Versailles. (R) Inside Versailles. **1.30 Film:** Miss Bala. (2011) **3.20** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Super 4. (R) **7.20** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.45** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.10** Ben 10. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** ITV Racing: The Opening Show. **10.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.20** Tipping Point. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Bigheads. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing Live: The Derby. Coverage of the Epsom Derby. **5.00** You've Been Framed! Unleashed! (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.10 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 Take Me Out. A ventriloquist from Reading, a property developer from Richmond, a judo coach from Perth and a Michael Jackson impersonator from Southport try to win a date. Last in the series.

8.00 The British Soap Awards 2017: Live. For the first time in its 18-year history, the annual award show is presented live, as Phillip Schofield welcomes the stars Coronation Street, Doctors, EastEnders, Emmerdale and Hollyoaks to gather at the Lowry in Salford in celebration of the year's best soapland plotlines. Making use of the results of a public vote, along with the verdict of a panel of expert judges, the winners of the Best Actor and Actress, Villain of the Year, Best Newcomer, Scene of the Year and more are revealed. Last year, Emmerdale claimed the coveted Best Soap award, while EastEnders' Lacey Turner nabbed the Best Actress award for the 10th time.

10.00 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness present their half-hour remake of Rocky, starring Anna Friel, Marvin Humes and Andi Peters. Last in the series.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 UEFA Champions League Highlights. Juventus v Real Madrid. Mark Pougatch presents action from the final of the prestigious competition, which took place at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.

11.45 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents. (R)

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Marathon: Tobago International Sea to Sea Marathon. **6.45** Mobil 1 The Grid. **7.15** Motor Sport: British GT. **7.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

6.55 Party Election Broadcast.

7.00 The Restoration Man. George Clarke returns to Harrogate, North Yorkshire, to check on the progress of Carol and Majid Nadry, who after 25 years living in a bungalow, embarked on an ambitious midlife adventure – buying a water tower to turn into a five-storey home. After huge delays and eye-watering legal costs, the couple have finally built the two-storey extension that was the key to creating a family home with character. George sees how the industrial heritage of this unique building is beautifully complemented by a 21st-century glass and sheet-metal extension that finally realises the old water tower's hidden potential. (R)

8.00 Britain's Ancient Tracks with Tony Robinson. The historian explores the UK's network of ancient trackways and roads, which have been walked by pilgrims, hunters and invaders over the course of the past 5,000 years. (R)

9.00 Film: Legend. (2015) Premiere. Biopic of the Kray brothers, exploring their rise to power in the London underworld and conflicts with rival gangs from the point of view of Reggie's wife Frances, who remains devoted to her husband even as he remains equally bound to his brutal, unstable sibling. Starring Tom Hardy as both twins.

11.35 Film: Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. (2011) Cold War thriller, starring Gary Oldman and Colin Firth.

1.50 The Last Leg. (R) **2.50** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.55** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. **5.55** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.20** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.55** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors: The Fatal Four. (R) **1.15** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **2.15** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **3.10** Benefits Britain: Me & My 14 Kids. (R) **4.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.10** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.

6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Officers chase £4,500 in court fees in North Wales after a property deal turned sour, and in Birmingham the agents try to collect over £3,500 from a single mum who defaulted on loan repayments. Elsewhere in Worcestershire, the enforcement agents try to recover more than £10,000 from a shop-keeper for fraudulently keeping a deposit during a property sale. (R)

7.10 NCIS: Los Angeles. Part two of two. The Chameleon's planted clues lead the team on a wild goose chase as it searches for NSA agent Mike Atley, who the criminal claims to have in his custody. Callen is faced with a difficult decision when he is told to release the Chameleon in order to save Atley's life, and contemplates subduing his nemesis once and for all. Last in the series.

8.00 NCIS. Ziva's family farm in Israel is devastated by an explosion, and the former NCIS agent is reported dead. Determined to seek justice, Tony ignores orders to stay off the case and sets out to track down Trent Kort, the British national and ex-CIA agent who remains the prime suspect. Last in the series.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Most Shocking Celebrity Moments of the 90s. A countdown of infamous incidents from the 1990s, including Hugh Grant's arrest and OJ Simpson's murder trial. The programme also looks back at Eric Cantona kicking a fan during a match, Jarvis Cocker interrupting Michael Jackson's performance at the Brit awards, and David and Victoria Beckham's lavish wedding. Featuring contributions from Louis Walsh, Shaun Ryder, Bez, Michael Burke, Darren Day, Gail Porter, Tim Vincent, Liz McClarnon and Kerry Katona. (R)

12.05 Access. **12.15** SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Setup. (2011)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Saints and Sinners: Britain's Millennium of Monasteries **8.00** The Search for Alfred the Great **9.00** Cardinal **10.25** Sounds of the Eighties **11.20** Lionel Richie – Dancing on the Ceiling **12.20** Lionel Richie at the BBC **1.20** Top of the Pops: The Story of 1984 **2.20** Top of the Pops: 1984 **3.20** Sounds of the Seventies **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.15 Britain's Got Talent **12.50** Britain's Got Talent Results **1.15** Take Me Out **2.35** Take Me Out – The Gossip **3.40 Film:** What a Girl Wants (2003) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45 Film:** What a Girl Wants (2003) **5.50 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **6.50** FYI Daily **6.55 Film:** Happy Feet (2006) **8.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **9.00 Film:** The Fast and the Furious (2001) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** The Fast and the Furious (2001) **11.10** Family Guy **1.10** American Dad! **2.05** Through the Keyhole **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.05 FYI Daily **11.10 Film:** Carry On Don't Lose Your Head (1966) **11.55 Film:** Columbo: The Most Crucial Game (1972) **1.35** Wycliffe **2.45** A Touch of Frost **4.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.50** Endeavour **9.00** Foyle's War **11.10** A Touch of Frost **1.20** Wycliffe **2.15** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
9.00 TT 2017: Superbike TT Race **10.00** Joey: The Man Who Conquered the TT **11.30 Film:** Hard Target (1993) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35 Film:** Hard Target (1993) **1.25** TT 2017: Superbike TT Race **2.30** Tommy Cooper **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
1.10 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **1.20 Film:** A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010) **3.05 Film:** Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Tower Heist (2011) **11.05** Gogglebox **1.00** Rude Tube **2.05** Tattoo Fixers **3.05** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.50** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.10** Kevin Can Wait **4.30** Black-ish **4.50** How I Met Your Mother

Film4
11.00 Thunderbirds Are Go! (1966) **1.00** Parental Guidance (2012) **3.05** Rio (2011) **4.50** Porridge (1979) **6.40** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) **9.00** The Grey (2011) Eight stranded oil rig workers must make a gruelling journey across the Alaskan tundra, stalked by a pack of ferocious wolves. Adventure, starring Liam Neeson and Frank Grillo. **11.15** The Hole (2009) Horror, starring Chris Massoglia. **1.05** Sinister (2012) **3.20** Close

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SUNDAY'S TV JUNE 4

CHOICE

Ant and Dec

Britain's Got Talent Final (ITV, 7.30pm)
Ant and Dec host the climax of this year's nationwide talent search. After a week of semi-final rounds, the finalists have been chosen and will give one last performance in a bid to win the support of the British public. Judges David Walliams, Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon and Amanda Holden will once again have their hands poised over the famous red buzzers - but the votes cast by viewers will decide who will be this year's winner and get the chance to appear at this year's Royal Variety Performance. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Pentecost with the Archbishop of Canterbury. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** Shop Well for Less? (R) **4.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.45** Points of View. **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Question Time Leaders Special. David Dimbleby presents a Leaders' Special Question Time with Tim Farron of the Liberal Democrats, and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the SNP.

7.00 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison report from Essex, visiting a restored oyster boat, a nature reserve for dragonflies, and a colony of common seals, and meeting people who build racing rowing boats. Steve Brown learns to fire a medieval longbow, Tom Heap reports on environmental damage caused by spoil heaps, and Adam Henson and Charlotte Smith meet a contender for Countryfile's Young Farmer Award.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents a second show from New Lanark on the banks of the Clyde, where items brought in to be valued include diamonds that were found after being hidden inside an upholstered chair, a claret jug that was rescued from a pawn shop, and a banner for Britain's oldest subscription library, founded in 1741.

9.00 Planet Earth II: A World of Wonder. A compilation of some of the most spectacular footage from the series, following wildlife living in jungles, mountains, deserts, islands, grasslands and cities.

10.00 BBC News.

10.25 Regional Programme.

10.35 Election Questions. Green Party leader Jonathan Bartley and UKIP leader Paul Nuttall answer questions from a studio audience. Presented by Jo Coburn.

11.35 Election Questions. A discussion on the key issues of the General Election, with questions from a studio audience.

12.05 The Women's Football Show.
12.40 Film: Up There. (2012) **1.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.00** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Great British Menu. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **1.45** Laurence Olivier: Talking Pictures. (R) **2.15 Film:** Pride and Prejudice. (1940) Period drama, starring Laurence Olivier. **4.10** Natural World. (R) **5.10** Flog It! (R)

6.00 The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway. Documentary following the work of more than 10,000 people as they race to build Crossrail – a new 73-mile train line linking east and west London, costing £15billion. As they excavate the 26 miles of tunnels, engineers must make sure that listed buildings don't crack, London Underground trains keep running, roads don't have to be shut and the City stays in business. Crucially, they must drive one of their gigantic 1,000-ton tunnel-boring machines through a narrow gap at Tottenham Court Road station without disturbing the passengers on the platforms below. (R)

7.00 Dragons' Den. The panel assesses the profit-making potential of a fledgling fashion business, a brand of pork scratchings and a device for folding paper. (R)

8.00 The Life Swap Adventure. A nurse from Nottingham who wants to live somewhere with a sense of community swaps places with a B&B owner from Alaska, who is hoping to escape her small-town life.

9.00 Paul Hollywood's Big Continental Road Trip. Paul spends six days exploring Germany in six different cars, visiting a Cold War checkpoint, a nudist colony, and the Nurburgring racetrack, where he is joined by comic Al Murray.

10.00 White Gold. Vincent, Fitzpatrick and Lavender meet a group of men from a local publishing company, and in the showroom, receptionist Carol tries to get to grips with the new office computer. (R)

10.30 Dara O Briain Crowd Tickler. (R)

11.30 Cricket: Champions Trophy Highlights. India v Pakistan.

12.20 Film: Salvage. (2009) **1.35** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.35** Holby City. (R) **3.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Super 4. (R) **7.20** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.45** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.10** Ben 10. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Britain's Best Walks with Julia Bradbury. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.05** ITV News; Weather. **12.20 Film:** The Queen. (2006) Fact-based drama about how the royal family and Tony Blair dealt with the aftermath of the death of Princess Diana. Starring an Oscar-winning Helen Mirren, with Michael Sheen. **2.25** Tipping Point. Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard, in which contestants answer questions to win turns on an arcade-style machine in the hope of winning up to £10,000. (R) **3.25** Live: Michael Carrick Testimonial. Manchester United '08 XI v Michael Carrick All Star XI (Kick-off 4.00pm). Coverage of the match at Old Trafford honouring the career of the longstanding Red Devils midfielder.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.25 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. (R)

7.30 Britain's Got Talent Final. Ant and Dec host the climax of this year's nationwide talent search, with viewers casting their votes to decide which of the acts will be this year's champion. Last in the series.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston. (R)

11.25 Unbelievable Moments Caught on Camera. Alastair Stewart presents extraordinary eyewitness footage filmed by members of the public, featuring fearsome storms, encounters with nature and dramatic rescues. (R)

12.25 Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **6.45** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Eating Well with Hemsley + Hemsley. **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Eat the Week. **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00 Film:** The Tigger Movie. (2000) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Jim Cummings. **3.35** Winnie-the-Pooh: The Most Famous Bear in the World. (R) **4.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **5.35** Homes by the Sea.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Supervet. A champion running dog is admitted to see if Noel and the team can fix its abnormal elbow joint, and a couple have a nerve-racking wait while their Rhodesian ridgeback undergoes a high-risk operation to relieve the pressure on the nerves in its spine. Noel also treats an injured dog belonging to a friend from the gym. (R)

8.00 Cabins in the Wild with Dick Strawbridge. Dick Strawbridge and Will Hardie take a look at a cabin inspired by the legend of King Arthur and a low-tech double-decker tepee. They also travel further afield in search of inspiration for their own projects, visiting a sea fort in the English Channel and a romantic retreat in Sussex.

9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. Offred and her fellow handmaids are called on to assist as Janine prepares to give birth on behalf of her owners. The experience brings back upsetting memories, as she looks back on having a baby of her own in the years before the despotic Gilead regime came to power. Offred develops a closer relationship with Ofglen, but fears for her future when she is summoned to a secret meeting with the Commander. Second episode of the drama based on Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel, starring Elisabeth Moss.

10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.05 Micky Flanagan's Out Out Tour. A performance by the comedian from his nationwide tour. (R)

12.10 Film: Apocalypto. (2006) **2.30** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **3.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Mr Men. **6.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.25** Wissper. (R) **6.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.45** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.55** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.10** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.15** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.10** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.25** Wissper. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.00** Little Princess. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.50** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.25** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud. **10.50** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.40** Police Interceptors: Rookies and Raids. (R) **12.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.40 Film:** Asteroid: Final Impact. (2015) Disaster thriller, starring Mark Lutz. **3.20 Film:** 10.0 Earthquake. (2014) Disaster movie, starring Cameron Richardson. **5.05 Film:** 2012. (2009) Disaster movie, starring John Cusack.

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Film: Jackie Chan's The Forbidden Kingdom. (2008) An American teenager obsessed with kung fu movies is sent back in time to ancient China, where he joins the battle to free the imprisoned Monkey King. The only problem is he has no martial arts skills of his own, and will need the assistance of two legendary warriors to become the hero he needs to be. Martial arts adventure, starring Jet Li and Jackie Chan.

10.00 Film: The Expendables 2. (2012) The mercenary team battles a rival band of hired guns who have killed one of their number. Action thriller sequel, starring Sylvester Stallone and Jean-Claude Van Damme. Includes 5 News Update at 11pm.

11.50 Greatest Ever Disaster Movies. Countdown as voted for by viewers of Channel 5 and readers of The Times, with contributions from actors including Robert Vaughn, George Kennedy and Ali Larter. (R)

1.15 SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Top 20 Funniest. A countdown of the funniest video clips in America. (R) **4.00** World's Most Pampered Pets. Part two of two. A disco designed specifically for dogs. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. A selection of highlights. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Egypt's Lost Queens **8.00** Egypt's Lost Cities **9.30** Egyptian Journeys with Dan Cruickshank **10.00** Arena: American Epic **11.00** Southern Rock at the BBC **12.00** Later... Folk America **1.00** Timeshift: Bridging the Gap – How the Severn Bridge Was Built **2.00** Engineering Giants: Gas Rig Strip-Down **3.00** Queen of Tigers: Natural World Special **4.00** Close

ITV2
11.10 Take Me Out **12.40** Take Me Out – The Gossip **1.45** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.45 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.45** FYI Daily **3.50 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.30 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **6.25 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **10.00** Britain's Got More Talent: Final **11.00** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.50 FYI Daily **11.55 Film:** The Nun's Story (1959) **1.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.50** Foyle's War **6.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This **12.05** A Touch of Frost **2.15** Heartbeat **3.05** May the Best House Win **4.45** On the Buses **5.40** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
9.00 TT 2017 **10.00** Cycling: Criterium du Dauphine Highlights **11.00** World Rugby U20 Championship Highlights **12.00** BRDC Formula 3 Championship Highlights **1.05** TT 2017 **2.10** Tommy Cooper **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.00 Made in Chelsea Does Come Dine with Me **1.00** The Big Bang Theory **2.00** The Goldbergs **2.55 Film:** The Core (2003) **5.35** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Rude Tube **11.00** Tattoo Fixers **1.10** 8 Out of 10 Cats **2.00** First Dates **3.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.45** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Picture Perfect (1997) **1.00** Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **2.45** ParaNorman (2012) **4.35** Mirror Mirror (2012) **6.45** About Time (2013) **9.00** Red (2010) **11.10** 48 Hrs (1982) **1.00** Rust and Bone (2012) **3.30** Close

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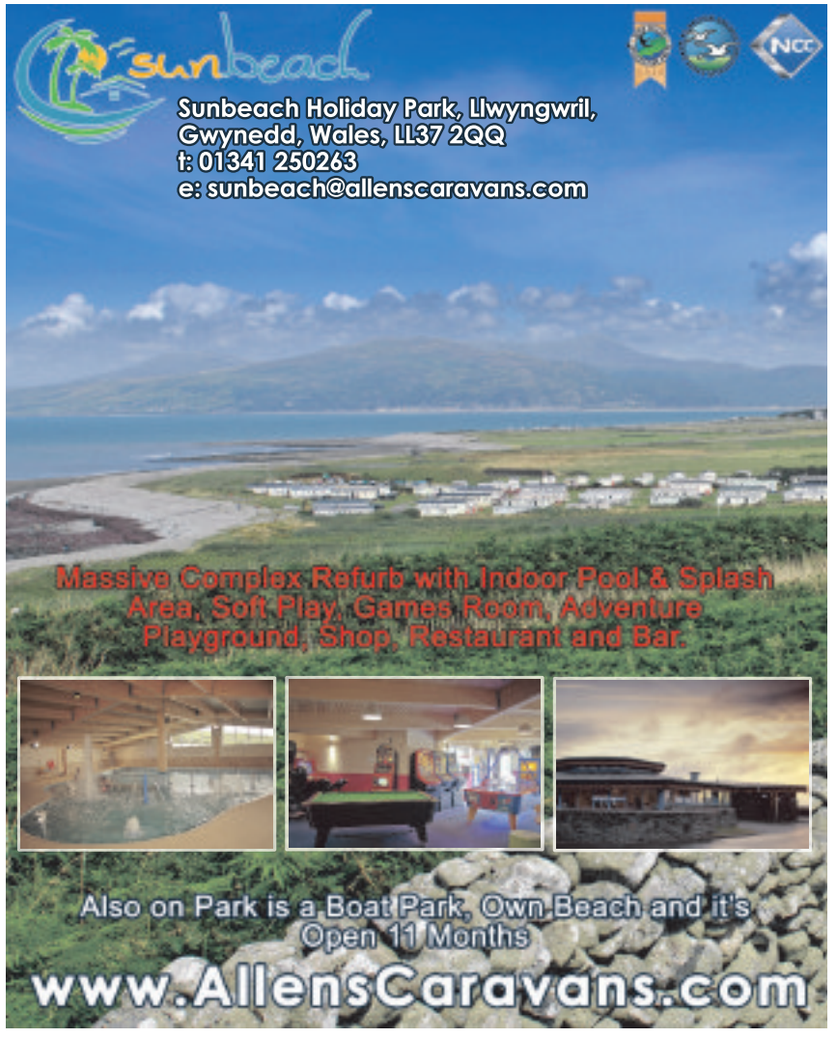

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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Captain Corelli's Mandolin, ITV, 10.50pm
A soldier in the Italian invasion force controlling the Greek island of Kefalonia during the Second World War falls for a local girl, much to the disapproval of the local community, her family and the leader of the island's resistance movement – who happens to be her boyfriend. Romantic drama, adapted from the novel by Louis de Bernieres, starring Nicolas Cage, Penelope Cruz and Christian Bale. (2001)

TUESDAY
Framed for Murder: A Fixer Upper Mystery, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Small-town restoration company boss Shannon Hughes is called into help renovate a 19th-century home, only for a neighbouring resident to wind up dead. Suspecting foul play, Shannon teams up with a handsome client to turn amateur sleuth, making use of her expertise in period property to get to the bottom of the crime. Light-hearted mystery, starring Jewel Kilcher and Colin Ferguson. (2017)

Elizabeth: The Golden Age, Wednesday, ITV, 11.25pm

WEDNESDAY
Elizabeth: The Golden Age, ITV, 11.25pm
Queen Elizabeth I faces threats at home and abroad, as Mary, Queen of Scots plots against her while the King of Spain builds a vast armada to undertake an invasion of England. Unable to reconcile her feelings for the dashing Sir Walter Raleigh with her duty to her country, the monarch engineers a romance between the courtier and one of her ladies-in-waiting. Historical drama sequel, with Cate Blanchett, Clive Owen, Geoffrey Rush and Samantha Morton. (2007)

THURSDAY
Reluctant Witness, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman in a witness protection programme must protect her new life and family when a man from her past turns up. Thriller, starring Mia Kirshner. (2014)

FRIDAY
The Proposal, BBC1, 11.25pm
A Canadian publishing editor trying to avoid deportation from America bribes her assistant into a marriage of convenience. Romantic comedy, with Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds. (2009)

Getting the inside story on an extraordinary case

He was one of Hollywood's brightest and wealthiest stars, a role model to African-Americans and philanthropist for black causes. Bill Cosby was, undeniably, an American icon.

Born in Philadelphia in 1937, he came to prominence as the first black American actor to land a starring role in a mainstream TV drama, playing the role of Alexander Scott in the secret agent adventure series I Spy in 1965.

Throughout the 1970s he appeared in a number of films, but his career went through the stratosphere when he produced and starred in eponymous sitcom The Cosby Show, which was rated as the No.1 show in America for five years from 1984 to 1989

Cosby's alter ego, the amiable obstetrician Dr Cliff Huxtable, was his crowning glory, and the impact of the show was enormous, redefining the way African-American families were represented on television.

His biographer Mark Whitaker summed up the entertainer's legacy: "Historians will measure the seismic impact of The Cosby Show on the entertainment industry and on American society.

"And they will point out how, by implanting such a positive image of black family life in the national consciousness, it helped Americans envision sending a black president and his wife and daughters to live in the White House less than two decades later."

Cosby inhabited the role of Dr Huxtable so completely and for such a long time that many people were perhaps fooled into thinking the character and creator were pretty much the same person.

However, such assumptions are rarely ever correct, and despite his 'America's Dad' persona, there was, allegedly, a dark side to Cosby's life off-screen.

Over the past decade, the actor and comedian, who turns 80 next month, has been accused of drugging and raping women with impunity throughout his career.

For years, accusations from numerous women fell on deaf ears, but ironically it was Cosby's own public pronouncements on morality which brought forth a criminal case.

When comedian Hannibal Buress publicly denounced Cosby as a rapist in 2014 without reprisal, dozens of women came forward alleging similar behaviour.

However, because their cases happened such a long time ago Cosby will face a criminal trial for only one of them. Today, on June 5, 2017, Cosby is, in Montgomery County in his home state of Pennsylvania, charged with sexual assault on a woman named Andrea Constand.

The trial is effectively the result of a single night, in January 2004, when Cosby is accused of drugging and sexually assaulting Constand, a then-30-year-old former Temple University women's basketball staffer, at his suburban home.

This film tells the story of how Cosby finally came to stand trial and explores why it took so long for allegations about him to be taken seriously.

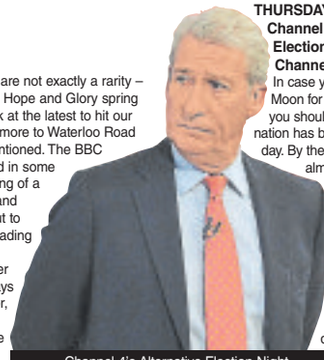
Bill Cosby: Fall of an American Icon, Monday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Big Brother: Live Launch
Channel 5, 8.30pm
It may only seem two minutes since January's 'Celebrity' run, but summer has finally arrived so Emma Willis is on hand to welcome another group of fame-seeking individuals into the revamped Big Brother house. This year, the theme is 'the United Kingdom of Big Brother – and everyone is welcome'. The famous 'eye' logo has been given a multi-coloured Union Jack makeover, while the housemates have been chosen from a range of backgrounds for what Channel 5 is describing as the ultimate social experiment. Although the identities of the housemates remains top secret, in a recent trailer teaser one person says: 'I am an heir to a country estate', while another confesses 'I had to marry in secret'. Get set for a few weeks of collaboration, contrasts and conflicts.

TUESDAY
Tried and Tasted: The Ultimate Shopping List
Channel 4, 8pm
Chef Michel Roux Jr and a panel of food experts blind taste-test some of the nation's favourite food and drink. Joining the host is London restaurant manager and First Dates' Fred Sirieix; journalist, broadcaster and critic Jay Rayner; baker and deli owner Stacie Stewart, and TV presenter Lucy Alexander. The products tested are apple pie, Scotch whisky, and lamb shanks. Plus, members of the public vote for the tastiest baked beans. Be warned: this may lead to a serious case of fridge-raiding during the break.

WEDNESDAY
Ackley Bridge
Channel 4, 8pm
TV dramas set in schools are not exactly a rarity – Grange Hill, Teachers and Hope and Glory spring to mind – but an early look at the latest to hit our screens suggests it owes more to Waterloo Road than any of the others mentioned. The BBC series was much-maligned in some quarters, but was something of a guilty pleasure to others, and Ackley Bridge may turn out to make a similar impact. Heading the cast are former EastEnders stars Jo Joyner and Paul Nicholls. She plays headteacher Mandy Carter, while he takes the role of PE teacher Steve Bell. The drama takes place in the Yorkshire town, home to largely divided white and Asian communities. Even the two local high schools are segregated – but that all changes when one of them is closed down, forcing teenagers of all colours and religions under one roof.


Channel 4's Alternative Election Night, Thursday, Channel 4, 9pm

THURSDAY
Channel 4's Alternative Election Night
Channel 4, 9pm
In case you've been living on the Moon for the past couple of months, you should be well aware that the nation has been going to the polls all day. By the time this programme airs, almost everyone who wants to cast their vote will have done so – polling stations close at 10pm, and in a few hours, the first results will begin filtering through. If the idea of watching the oh-so-serious action unfold on the BBC, ITV or Sky doesn't float your boat, then Channel 4 has the perfect antidote. Jeremy Paxman, David Mitchell and Richard Osman take charge of the proceedings and will be joined by a number of studio guests offering their views. While Paxman takes charge of the interviews, Mitchell and Osman are more irreverent, and the trio are joined by Cathy Newman and Gary Gibbon, who will analyse any breaking news.

FRIDAY
Gogglesprogs
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. The first of a new six-part run in which the nation's younger viewers maintain a close eye on a range of TV output. This series sees the existing army of junior sofa critics supplemented by newcomers Roma, Joel, Jack, Sadie, Declan, Amelinda and Yoanna, who join in to offer their honest, inimitable and ultimately hilarious take on recent shows to hit the small-screen. Items under scrutiny in this opening edition include coverage of the General Election and the classic movie Grease.

Question Time
BBC1, 8.30pm
David Dimbleby chairs a special edition of the topical debate from London as guests from the worlds of politics and the media answer questions posed by members of the public.

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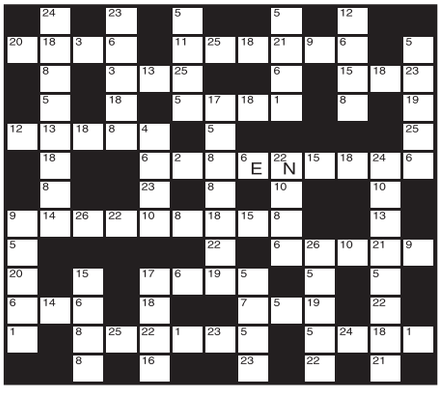
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6 E	19
7	20
8	21
9	22 N
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
O	P	W	N	Z	K	G	L	Q	I	A	E	S
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
M	X	D	T	H	R	Y	C	J	F	B	U	V

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

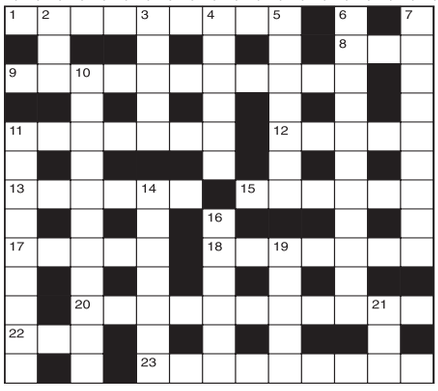
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. What biased sporting photographers do! (4,5)
8. See 17 Across
9. End, as even the longest sentences do (4,2,1,4)
11. Defensive wall to appear different near the top of the trench (7)
12. Why Dracula hides another monster (5)
13. Right among those different people! (6)
15. Fixes a water system for the fruit, we hear (6)
17 & 8Ac. He's saddled with the pack (8)
18. Noble baritone gets upset when I leave (7)
20. Tree producing pumice? (8,3)
22. One about to show bad temper (3)
23. An expert in physics (9)

Down

2. A tailless hound causes a fuss (3)
3. Is put in trouble - don't retire (3,2)
4. Rough sketches for indoor game, we hear (6)
5. What the schoolboy carries will upset nearly all the class (7)
6. An obstacle to a collection of baggage (11)
7. Train isn't diverted on the move (2,7)
10. Trader gets hands for the ships (11)
11. Clairvoyant hit copper in disorder (9)
14. Come back within hearing (7)
16. Calms down a wild beast (6)
19. Change the level of the beams, one hears (5)
21. Interview some of these examinees (3)



Quick Clues:

Across

1. Duffer (9)
8. Devour (3)
9. Date (11)
11. Utter (7)
12. Claw (5)
13. Cows (6)
15. Staid (6)
17. Brief (5)
18. Criminal (7)
20. Legacy (11)
22. Forefront (3)
23. Cash-keeper (9)

Down

2. Interval (3)
3. Uplift (5)
4. Affair (6)
5. Encase (7)
6. Reprisal (11)
7. Rigorous (9)
10. Entreating (11)
11. Immoderate (9)
14. Shoe-fastening (7)
16. Uncommon (6)
19. Memoranda (5)
21. Hint (3)

Sudoku

6				5	3			
					8		4	1
	9		6	7			8	3
	3	4					5	2
				4	2			
2	5					9	6	
8	2			6	1		7	
4			7			2		
			3	2				8

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	1	7	9	6	3	8	2	5
6	3	5	7	2	8	9	1	4
2	9	8	1	5	4	6	7	3
1	4	2	8	3	6	7	5	9
9	7	3	5	1	2	4	6	8
8	5	6	4	7	9	2	3	1
7	2	4	3	8	5	1	9	6
3	8	1	6	9	7	5	4	2
5	6	9	2	4	1	3	8	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Relief; 8 Donate; 10 Violets; 11 Sites; 12 Even; 13 Clogs; 17 Liana; 18 Take; 22 Apace; 23 Dripped; 24 Canvas; 25 Thrown. Down: 1 Preview; 2 Allowed; 3 Rebel; 4 Corsage; 5 Party; 6 Least; 9 Esplanade; 14 Liberal; 15 Harpoon; 16 Leading; 19 Fancy; 20 Pains; 21 Light.
QUICK - Across: 7 Portal; 8 Bellow; 10 Rampage; 11 Chore; 12 Also; 13 Merry; 17 Irate; 18 Mete; 22 Lotus; 23 Outcome; 24 Concur; 25 Cognac. Down: 1 Spartan; 2 Promise; 3 Fatal; 4 Mercury; 5 Bloom; 6 Owner; 9 Defection; 14 Brusque; 15 Recount; 16 Defence; 19 Slack; 20 Atone; 21 Stool.

Quiz

1. Which singer was called the Empress of the Blues?
2. Who wrote the opera Parsifal?
3. What is a member of the Society of Jesus called?
4. Which singer and actress was born Frances Gumm?
5. What is the parliament building in Northern Ireland called?
6. What is pemmican?
7. About which leader's life did physician Li Zhisui write a book?
8. What do we call the central part of a church between the choir and the entrance?
9. What was the period 1811-20 called in Britain?
10. Of which country is Massawa the chief port?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Congo; 2 Pi; 3 Edvard Grieg; 4 Rowing; 5 Balzac; 6 Rodent; 7 Nicholas Rowe; 8 Privy Council; 9 Welsh; 10 Oliver Stone.

Niner: LAUNDRIES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

4386	gives a fruit,
837162576	gives a second fruit,
679686	gives an Ethiopian root vegetable.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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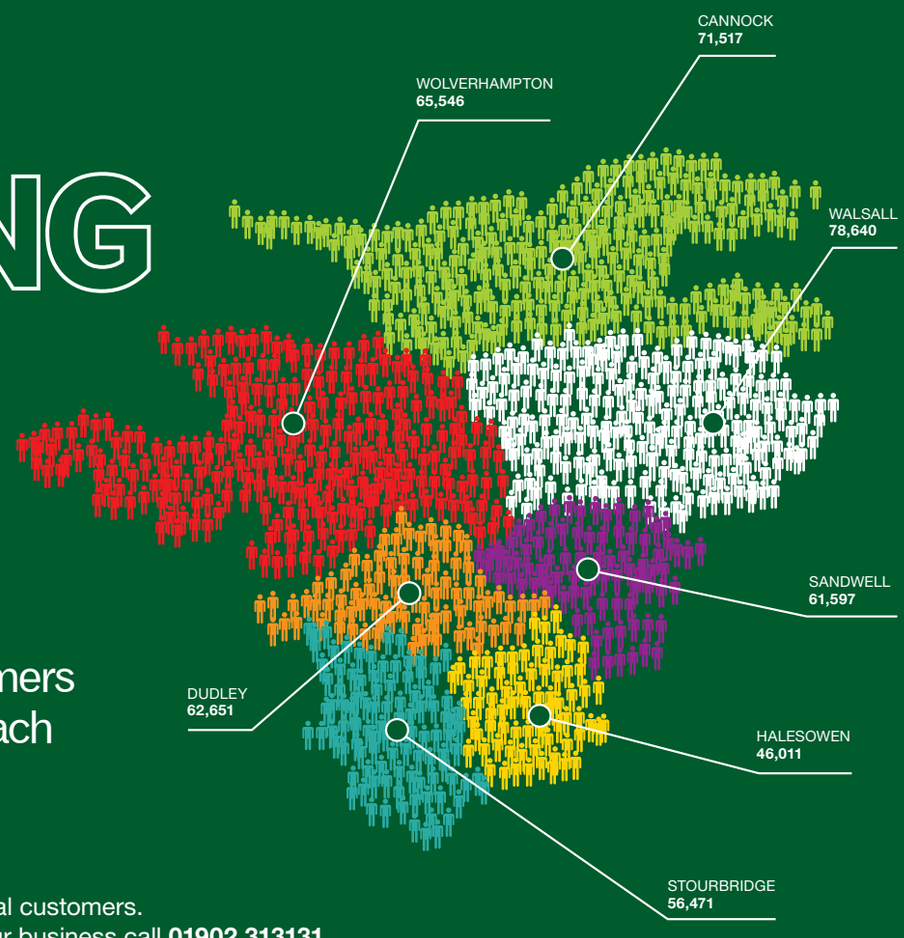

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Capital way to step out in style

BECAUSE I'm worth it'. A phrase made famous by a certain cosmetics company and a host of beautiful celebrities – and not a bad motto for life!

We all work long days, wearing countless hats and juggling various tasks. So don't we all deserve a little indulgence every now and again? I think so – so I did. And what a treat it was!

With some quality mother-daughter time in mind, we jumped on a train and headed to London for a girls' weekend. A nice hotel, shopping therapy, fine dining and a West End show were on the itinerary.

We certainly hit the jackpot with our hotel – the stylish One Aldwych. The Grade II listed building is particularly striking both outside and in. It is a grand triangular building, dating back to 1907, which sits at the end of The Strand, opposite Waterloo Bridge.

Lovely – enjoy the sights in Covent Garden

Three cheers – have a drink in the lobby bar

UNUSUAL

Lord Glenesk, owner of the Morning Post, commissioned Anglo-French architects to build One Aldwych which led to the unusual blend of Edwardian grandeur and some Parisian elegance. It was home to the Morning Post, where Sir Winston Churchill once worked, for some 20 years. The presses were in the basement which now houses the swimming pool.

Both the impressive Lobby Bar and the Indigo restaurant were incredibly busy during our stay with a lot of the guests not actually staying at the hotel, testament to the quality of its fare and the ambience.

The Lobby Bar is a sophisticated, airy setting to sit and relax and has developed a reputation for both its cocktails and the afternoon tea.

The cocktails are especially creative. Inspired by the shows in the West End they are quite imaginative with my Jasmine Breeze, an Aladdin-themed cocktail, coming in a lamp and actually smoking. Indigo restaurant is a slightly more formal dining experience in many ways but offers a gastronomical adventure.

There are 93 large rooms and 12 suites to suit a variety of budgets from a standard room to the extravagant deluxe suites. The hotel has a health club with pool, sauna, steam room and gym. Beauty treatments are available for some real pampering – after all you are worth it.

And if it is all about location, location, location then this is the place to be. The hotel is in Covent Garden and ideally placed for both sight-seeing and Theatreland.

We whiled away the hours pottering around the independent stalls in the Covent Garden market as well as checking out some of the top-end shop chains and enjoying a leisurely lunch. There remains quite a boho and relaxed feel to Covent Garden despite it being one of the fashionable places to pass the time.

We also checked out the hustle and bustle of Leicester Square – happy to sit in the sun and watch the many colourful and varied street entertainers.

For sightseeing Trafalgar Square was a stone's throw away and the London Eye towered over nearby buildings.

The hotel is perfectly situated for shows being close to many theatres – across the road is the Lyceum theatre which is showing the Lion King. We took the short walk to the Vaudeville Theatre to see Stepping Out.

My daughter and I headed to London and One Aldwych for a girls' weekend but it could just as easily have suited couples or families looking for a city break and spoil themselves. After all, aren't we worth it?

DIANE DAVIES

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D7301 Aqua	D2979 Royal blue

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Beautiful home in sought after prime location

Having been recently renovated throughout, this beautifully presented three-bedroomed semi-detached property in Pitcairn Road, Bearwood is for sale through Liberty Estates at £235,000.

In the highly sought-after area of Bearwood Warley woods, this property really does need to be viewed in order to be fully appreciated.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance porch, an entrance hall, three good sized bedrooms, a kitchen/diner, a living room, a bathroom featuring a four piece bathroom suite, a utility and a ground floor guest WC, plus off road parking.

In more detail the entrance hall has under-stairs storage and stairs off to the first floor accommodation.

The living room has a bay window to the front of the property, carpeted flooring and has doors leading to the kitchen/diner.

The kitchen/diner has patio doors and windows to the rear elevation, a modern fitted kitchen with wall base and draw units, roll edge work surfaces, a one and a half bowel sink and drainer, an electric hob and an oven with a hood over, an integrated fridge and freezer, a wall mounted vertical radiator and tiling to splash back areas and a tv point on wall.

The utility room has roller shutters to the front elevation and leads to a ground floor WC and a door to the rear garden.

Outside, the garden has a paved patio area with steps down with lawn areas with shrubs and planting areas.

The selling agents are expecting a great deal of interest to be shown in this stunningly presented and spacious home.

Bearwood is the southern part of Smethwick, Sandwell, West Midlands, England, and north of the A456 Hagley Road. Bearwood Hill was the original name of the High Street from Smethwick Council House to Windmill Lane. Bearwood is included in Abbey Ward in Sandwell Metropolitan Borough.

Bearwood, like many areas of the West Midlands conurbation, has a local sense of place, although it has become absorbed into Smethwick proper. Many locals still use the term "The Bear" especially referring to "The Bear Hotel" located in Bearwood. An old map of the 18th century mentions 'The Bear of Smithwick'.

BEARWOOD £235,000

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

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KEY FEATURES

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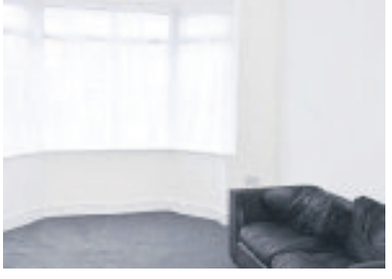
3 bedrooms
Semi-detached
Desirable area
Bathroom & guest WC



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ADVERTISING FEATURE

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Lovell Homes is offering house-hunters in the West Midlands the opportunity to save £1,000 on a brand-new home at its Harvills Grange development in West Bromwich – and get their carpets free!

The company will pay £1,000 towards the buyer's legal fees and also provide a free flooring (carpets) package on selected plots (subject to terms and conditions).

The special incentive is available on plot 93 - the family-friendly three bedroom semi-detached Ringwood house style, with garage, which is priced from £181,950 (£145,560 after a Help to Buy: Equity Loan*).

Lovell Homes field sales manager Michelle Barnsley says: "The Ringwood delivers fantastic value and, combined with our legal fees and flooring offer, there couldn't be a better time to buy. Opting for a new home also takes away the extra costs often associated with upgrading a second-hand property. At the same time, it allows you the freedom to shape your surroundings to suit your own tastes and requirements, rather than having to live with the previous owner's choices.

"Prospective buyers can experience the functional and stylish living space available at Harvills Grange by visiting our stunning new-look Ringwood show home, now open at the development. It's a great way to see for yourself the superior design and build quality, as well as get interiors inspiration."

The Ringwood, Harvills Grange

Lovell Homes' Ringwood house style offers a layout perfect for families, as well as couples requiring extra space. The ground-floor includes an attractive living / dining room with French doors opening to the garden while the stylish kitchen is equipped with integrated fridge-freezer and dishwasher plus a Bosch stainless steel double oven and gas hob. Also on the ground floor is the hallway, cloakroom and under-stairs storage. On the first floor is the master bedroom, with en-suite, as well as two further bedrooms and the family bathroom.

In a location which will definitely appeal to Midlands commuters, Harvills Grange is less than a mile from the A41 Black Country New Road which gives direct access to the M5 and M6. It's also just a short walk from the Metro line. West Bromwich itself also has excellent shopping and leisure facilities with the town centre having benefited from a major regeneration in recent years: attractions include the New Square shopping and leisure complex as well as an extensive choice of restaurants and cafes and an Odeon cinema.

The Ringwood show home interior

The Harvills Grange sales and marketing suite on Dial Lane, West Bromwich B70 0EQ is open on Monday from 11am to 5pm and on Thursday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Contact the sales team on 0121 514 8239 to find out more or visit lovellnewhomes.co.uk

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Three-bed home has extension potential

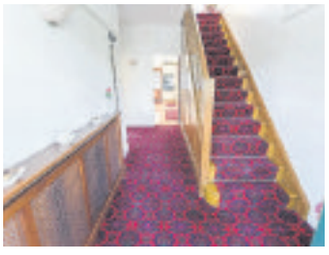
TIVIDALE
£229,950

In one of the area's most sought-after locations, this three-bedroomed detached house in Lower City Road, Tividale, Oldbury, has good-family sized accommodation and the potential to extend to the side.

It is for sale through Tom Giles at £229,950.

It has a storm porch entrance into a reception hall, two reception rooms – both with feature fireplaces, a kitchen, utility area with WC and a side garage off, three bedrooms, a bathroom with a double width shower, central heating (except rear sitting room), majority double glazing, a front driveway and a large garden to rear. The property backs on to the school site at the rear and is deceptively spacious.

Call Tom Giles on 0121 552 6171.



Traditionally styled well kept detached family home

OLDBURY
£289,950 <<<

A well maintained traditional detached period property in Victoria Road, Oldbury, lies in one of the area's premier locations.

Situated opposite West Smethwick Park Pool and having a sunny southerly aspect and landscaped garden to the rear, it also has excellent family accommodation.

It is for sale through Tom Giles at £289,950. Its accommodation briefly comprises a storm porch entrance, large hallway, two reception rooms with a feature fireplace, conservatory, family kitchen, lobby and passage way, office, downstairs shower room and a utility area. There are three bedrooms, a bathroom, central heating, double glazing, extensive gardens to the rear and off-road parking.

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Traditional property is situated close to schools

A traditional semi-detached house in a sought-after residential location, this three-bedroom property in Moat Road, Oldbury, is for sale through Tom Giles at £199,950.

With double glazing and gas central heating it has an entrance hall and an under-stairs storage cupboard, a dining room, lounge and dining kitchen, three bedrooms

OLDBURY
£199,950

and a shower room. It also has a garage, off-road parking and established gardens to the front and rear. It is also within walking distance of the Q3 Academy, Our Lady & St Huberts Catholic Primary School and Moat Farm Infant & Junior School. Barnford Hill Park is also within walking distance providing recreational facilities, shopping facilities at Merrivale and Langley High Street, together with Langley Green Railway Station.

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TIVIDALE LOWER CITY ROAD £229,950
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A detached property situated in one of the areas most sought after locations with potential to extend to side and rear subject to Planning and Building Consent. In need of some improvement. EPC Rating E

TIVIDALE NEW BIRMINGHAM ROAD £220,000
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OLDBURY MOAT ROAD £199,950
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ROWLEY REGIS BLACKBERRY LANE £135,000
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OLDBURY GILES ROAD £119,950
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TIPTON ANITA AVENUE £114,950
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OLDBURY BIRMINGHAM STREET £250,000
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OLDBURY BIRMINGHAM STREET £11,500 per annum
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OLDBURY CHURCH STREET £5,500 per annum
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OLDBURY EVA ROAD £650 pcm
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OLDBURY BRISTNALL HALL ROAD £650 pcm
3 2 1
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12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

bathrooms

BATHROOMS R US
Over 20 years exp in bathroom installations. Refurbs/ Plastering EMERGENCY CALL OUTS!
20% OFF, FREE QUOTES
07392 379741 or 01543 529648

BATHROOM DESIGN. All bathrooms fitted, tiling, flooring, complete bathrooms. 07850 382548.

building services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years exp
All aspects of building work
Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

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APPROVED CONTRACTOR
All damp problems, roofing, building & plastering work
FREE QUOTES
07538 118034 or 01902 752161

EVE BUILDING SERVICES
ALL BRICKWORK, ROOFING, PAVING & GROUNDWORKS ETC.
QUALITY GUARANTEED
FREE QUOTES CALL
0121 5304962/ 0795 8766771

building supplies

QUALITY DOORS AND HARDWOOD FLOORING @ low prices. Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

RECLAIMED BRICKS, Tiles, Slates, Oakbeams, Flooring, York Stone. Cawarden 01889 574066. sales@cawardenreclaim.co.uk

carpentry & joinery

CARPENTRY AND JOINERY Kitchens, fitted wardrobes, doors, flooring, staircases and refurbs. 07903 234137 or 0121 4939733.

carpet fitters

A CARPETS & VINYLS supplied or just fitted, quality samples brought to your home, no job too small, free quotes call Mark 01543 820598 / 07941 619694.

fencing

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £695
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"

Michael - Portway Fencing.

For great business results call
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ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

gardening services

Landywood Tree & Landscaping Services
All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
www.landywoodlandscaping.co.uk
01922 898 710 / 07973 177 976

J&B TREE CARE Landscape and Jetwashing Services. All Pesticide /Fungicide work. Free fixed quotes: 07786 166856/ 01922 449268.

gas fitting

GAS SERVICES
• Boilers • Cookers
• Fires • Gas Checks
• Landlord Certificates
• Gas Leaks Traced
Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

gates

ALL METAL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs & fitting. 07903 500642 24 hours.

DARLASTON FABS 30 years exp in supplying/ fitting gates and railings. Free quotes: 07497 667752.

handyman services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

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Mr Causer.

For great business results call
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HANDY MAN - Most trades, plumbing, heating, gardening & decorating. Gutter clean no ladders, free quotes. 07850 559315.

LOCK & CARPENTRY Plumbing, Small job specialist. Free quotes 01902 683100 or 07934 460864.

house clearances

ALL ROUND CLEARANCE
Professional family run business
House clearances full or part, also garages, sheds etc.
Telephone Kev
07794 912844

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. 07852 172641 / 07710 360327

kitchen fitters

THE KITCHEN FITTER Over 20 years experience. Call 07881 654757 or 01543 373233.

lock services

LOCKRITE local father and daughter locksmiths, lock-outs, broken locks, UPVC specialist, 24hr service. 01922 780078.

painters / decorators

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering. Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

LADY DECORATOR, full house or one wall - to customer requirments. For a quote call 07522 643706.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

plastering

MINT PLASTERING
For the very best in plastering and rendering, full rooms inc materials from 110. Halls, stairs and landings from 200
30 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
01922 606503 / 07519 694516

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

MINT PLASTERING & rendering 30 yrs exp. All work guaranteed. 01922 606503 or 07519 694516.

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

plumbing & heating

ALL PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN
No job too small or large.
Call Will for a free quote
07521 411108

A.A HEATING & PLUMBING All gas work. Install/ Service/ Repair. 01922 660410 or 07540 950588.

GAS CENTRAL HEATING Central heating and Boiler changes. Gas Safe, Free Quotes: 07497 826697.

PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN No job too small or large. Call Will for a free quote on: 07521 411108.

removals

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KC REMOVALS We beat any quote, full or part loads, all areas. Anything considered. Call on 07867 862227.

KT REMOVALS 12 yrs exp. Single items to full load removals. Local / distance. Call Ric: 07771 727119.

roofing

A GRIFFITHS ROOFING & BUILDING Pitched & flat roofs. repairs, chimneys, fascias, guttering. 35 yrs exp. 07941 907401/01902 865771.

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

rubbish removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed,Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

skip hire

MT SKIPS & GRAB HIRE
Save £££s
All size skips and all areas covered
Same day delivery faster than a phone call!!!
Open 7 days a week
SCRAP CARS REMOVED FOR FREE
07920 88 57 74 or 01384 24 09 56

A absolute affordable skip
RUSSELL SKIPS
Mini, midi skips
Prompt delivery / collection
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GOLDSHILL SKIPS
Bring your own waste cheaper than skips. General, Green, Wood waste any size vehicle. Phone for prices:
0121 557 3346

AAA SKIP HIRE All sizes available, competitive prices. Call: 01922 711411(option 2) or 07592 940556.

STONES SKIP HIRE 0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875 www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

upholstery

MR B'S UPHOLSTERY
RE- UPHOLSTERING OF SOFA'S, DINING FURNITURE, CARAVANS, CAR RETRIMS AND MORE.
www.mrbsupholstery.co.uk
01543 500677 07738 851601

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

business directory

commercial premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

accommodation to let

J9 Accommodation
NO DEPOSIT
★MOVE IN TODAY★
Studios
from **£90pw***
Rooms
from **£65pw***
**Includes Most Bills*
CHECK WEBSITE FOR LIVE LIST
Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme
01902 213121
J9accommodation.com

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

flats for sale

TWO BEDROOM GROUDFLOOR APARTMENT
In Penn Village.
Corner position.
£110,000 ono.
01902 331155.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

I BUY HOUSES
- Expired listings
- Fire damaged houses
- Debt ridden houses
- Vacant houses
- Smelly houses
- Unwanted houses

Any place, any area, any condition. If you don't want it, I do!
Call Amy: 07511 299 010

Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

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Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer
For great business results call **01902 319 191**
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Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start
Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**
- ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
- COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
- FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
- FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
- LOCAL COMPANY

MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
0121 405 0767
*Terms and Conditions apply
OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

7 Jobs

building & construction

PAINTERS, DECORATORS, CARPENTERS & MULTI TASKS TRADE PERSONS
NVQ Level 2 min & CSCS card. Direct / Sub contract. Local & out of town working.
Apply
Hankinson Painting Contractors
0121 553 7510
or email details to
wb.admin@hankinson.co.uk
We are an equal opportunities employer

dentistry

DENTAL NURSES AND RECEPTIONISTS required, GDC registered Flexible hours F/T, P/T available7 days per week (8am - 11pm) Wage 12K -20 k - negotiable, overtime & bonuses Immediate starts email CV to info@scottarmsdentalpractice.com

employment wanted

ADMIN / RECEPTION / GENERAL OFFICE WORK WANTED
For smart lady, seeks ideally a long term permanent role or any temporary work.
Excellent references. Walsall & surrounding areas.
07976 888820/01922 635813.
goodman1921@hotmail.co.uk

engineering

MAINTENANCE ENGINEER required, must have experience in Breakdown and General Maintenance, and some electrical knowledge to maintain Slitting Machines / Rolling Mills. Good Rates of pay for an experienced person. Birmingham Area. Please apply only with CV to Sharon.c@staystrip.co.uk

courses

BIRMINGHAM: 17-18 JULY & 30 NOV.-1 DEC.
WOLVERHAMPTON: 16-17 SEPT.
TELFORD: 20-21 MAY & 23-24 OCTOBER
Geopace Training
Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST
NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - National UK Qualification
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
ocn Credit4Learning
For more info or to book: **www.geopace.com**
HIGH DEMAND IN: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD

full time - general

SBBS Building & Scaffolding Ltd
SBBS Building & Scaffolding Ltd, Wednesbury require
SCAFFOLDERS, SCAFFOLDING TRAINEES & LABOURERS
Training will be provided.
You must be over 18.
Please Tel: Joe on 07918 742851.
Email craig@sbbs-site.co.uk

hair & beauty

GENTS HAIRDRESSER (Barber required) Also School Leaver for Apprenticeship Quinton Tel 0121 422 4104

manufacturing

LIBERTY BRIDGE ALUMINIUM LTD HAS VACANCIES FOR EXPERIENCED GRAVITY DIE CASTERS
to work various shifts. Candidates should have experience of aluminium casting within the automotive industry. Position offers competitive rates of pay.
Please email tracey.pearce@libertyhg.com

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

BMW X1
2011, 81,000 miles, black, abs, electric windows, air con, fsh, alarm, long MoT, one owner, diesel, alloys, CD, 177BHP, sports seats.
£9,500.
07734 956636.

BMW 520i SALOON
Manual gear change, dark blue inside, superbly maintained, 2002 reg.
Part exchanged considered.
£1,675.
01952 811019. 07929 957102.

BMW X3 3.0i SE
54 plate, 100,000 miles, 2 owners, all usual extras.
£3,200 ono.
07501 755703.

PEUGEOT 107 URBAN LITE 1.0
2008, 52,000 miles, red, one owner (lady), fsh, long MoT. Very cheap to run.
Ideal 1st car.
£2,395 ono.
07976 653388.

EXCELLENT CONDITION
PEUGEOT 208 PURE TECH ACTIVE
1.0, five door, white, October 65 reg, one lady owner, 8,000 miles only, 18 months warranty.
£7,295 o.n.o.
0121 358 6350.
07774 681486.

4X4
RANGE ROVER FANTOM 2.7 DIESEL
Auto, 2008, grey, 97,000 miles, full MoT, very good condition.
£15,000 o.n.o.
07836 568903.

VW POLO 1.2S
3dr, 2006, 12 months MoT, no advisories, 88,000 miles, fsh, air con, alloys, radio/cd, three lady owners, good condition,
£1,895.
07977 939497,

cars under £1500

CITROEN XSARA PICASSO
2004, (54 reg), Exclusive, 2.0Hdi diesel, 70,000 miles, sahara gold, abs, electric windows, air con, cruise control, long MoT.
£950.
07854 617312.

BARGAIN
FIAT PUNTO 1.2 ACTIVE
Blue, 55 reg., 67,000 miles, recent oil service, two lady owners, aircon, radio cd, good condition.
£975
07486 646777.

IDEAL FIRST CAR
FORD KA EXCLUSIVE
04 reg.
73,000 miles,
12 months MoT.
Black leather trim.
Alloys, central locking, PAS.
£450 ono
07976 293994.

PEUGEOT 206
Automatic, 1.4, low mileage.
Full MoT,
£1,100 ono.
01543 579022.

DIESEL
PEUGEOT 206 QUICKSILVER
HDi, 3-dr, silver, only 62,000 miles, with service history, one former lady keeper, long Mot, as new condition.
only £795.
07963 464780.

EXCELLENT CONDITION
PEUGEOT 407 SW 2.0 HDi
57 plate,
MoT November,
top spec, silver,
very nice car,
any trial.
£1,200 ono
07725 486316.

SAAB 93 SE 2.0 T CONVERTIBLE
106,000 miles, silver and black. MoT Oct, fsh. Leather heated seats. Electric windows and hood. Cruise control.
£1,200 ono.
07901 830157.

commercial vehicles

DIESEL
VAUXHALL COMBO VAN
1996, full MoT.
Many new parts.
Good condition.
£450 ono.
01922 405625.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

BEATRICE MAY DIXON (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 12a Aviary Court Wiltshire Way West Bromwich West Midlands B71 1JR, who died on 16/11/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 11/08/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
BACHES SOLICITORS
Lombard House Cronehills Linkway
West Bromwich West Midlands B70 7PL
T503018

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Planning
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/17/60600	Travis Perkins (Properties) Limited	A & D Aquatic & Garden Centre 6 Churchbridge Oldbury B69 2AP	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of builders' warehouse (B8 use class), including internal and external storage areas, ancillary trade counter, associated access alterations, parking, landscaping and boundary fencing.

The proposed development may affect the setting of a Listed Building(s), and the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

This is a major application.

DC/17/60515	Mr David Russell	Trinity Motors Limited 150 - 152 High Street & 1 South Road Smethwick B66 3AJ	Proposed demolition of existing car garage and 2 flats and construction of 23 residential dwellings (outline application for access, layout and scale).

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.00a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR NICK BUBALO, Director – Regeneration and Planning

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
The Borough Council of Sandwell (Windmill Lane, Smethwick) (Temporary One-Way Operation No.3) Order 2017, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Windmill Lane, Smethwick between the entrance to the Windmills Shopping Centre and Cape Hill other than in a northerly direction. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 04/06/17, effective from 04/06/17. Alternative route for south bound vehicles via Grove Lane and Cape Hill. Purpose – work to a T-Mobile phone mast by Blade Access.

10 Personals

DIVORCED MALE, MID 50S
Genuine and sincere with GSOH, no ties, own house and car, seeks female for Friendship possible relationship.
Box Number P20815 ,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

personal

IT'S FREE IT'S EASY
**Advertise any item FREE up to the value of £250 go to:*
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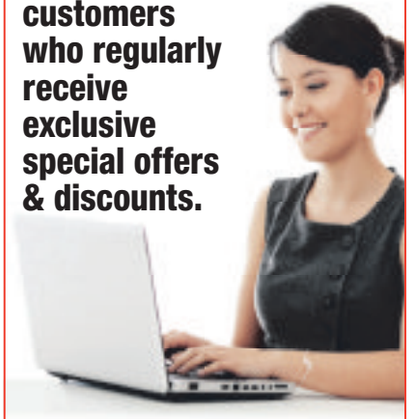
*T&C's apply

FreeAds

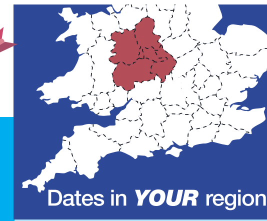
BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT
bookanad. expressandstar.co.uk
and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.



ClassifiedAds

Express & Star DATING

YOUR regional dating service, run by the dating experts who have been established since 1990. ***REAL people in YOUR region***



Here's how to use your dating service ...

To ***Place*** your advert call:

0844 381 5936

follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text

Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098 FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

YOU can now ***Date ONLINE*** or via your mobile just visit:

http://dating.expressandstar.com

To ***Reply*** to members call:

0906 500 3955

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:

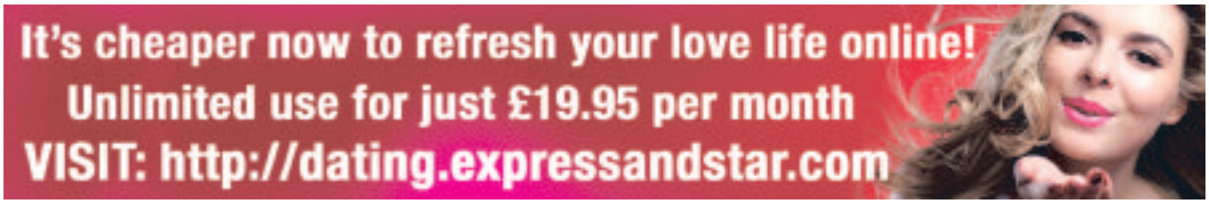
Text... **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:

0906 500 3957

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**



Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

JANINE, 40, petite cute female who loves meals in/out, romantic strolls, WLTM interesting appreciative, independent man for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427237**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3000 Box 419673**

JEANETTE, blonde blue eyed attractive active nurse who really cares about people, WLTM someone genuine and honest to fall in love with. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427191**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3008 Box: 409715**

ALISON 37, animal loving female who enjoys a quiet life, cooking, seeks older male 40-60yrs to enjoy meals out and cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427101**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3016 Box: 413399**

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427075**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3020 Box 421375**

JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426845**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3004 Box 422365**

BRIDGET 48, voluptuous, seductive and very saucy, seeks male for lots of TLC and to make very happy in return. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426839**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3032 Box 425979**

ANNE blonde hair, blue eyes, seeks males for no strings adult fun! Call and leave a number for me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426843**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3012 Box 426201**

CHRIS, 40, blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426823**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3028 Box 426205**

TRISH, 44, tall slim, good looking, GSOH, professional, solvent, OHAC, affectionate and loves TLC, WLTM male who also likes to be in a loving relationship, 39-50yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427021**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3040 Box 426851**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426347**

EMILY, kind caring lady, recently widowed and lonely. I am 57yrs old and hoping to chat with a nice chap 60+. Please text me. **Text Only. Mailbox 4164240**

FEMALE Doctor, 60, Asian, divorced, youthful and broad minded, likes eating out, holidays, keep fit and meditation. Very busy but text to find out more. **Text only Mailbox: 5840579**

TOKKIA, Nigerian lady, very attractive with attractive, caring and kind. I'm a good cook and would love to find a nice man to spoil and pamper. I am late 50s but look young and fit. Seeking gent 58+. **Text Only. Mailbox 4025379**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425323**

MANDY, 64yrs but still fit and sexy. Hoping to meet younger local lad for good daytime fun. Chats and texts any time. **TEXT ONLY. Box: 4050784**

JANE, 49, young looking attractive female looking to liven life up at bit with similar interesting, spontaneous man. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426705**

JANET tall beautiful brunette, slim 12, separated, enjoys life, no hang-ups, wanting quality time, friendship and possible romance with similar guy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426807**

DEBS lonely 40's female with no ties, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things in life looking for similar soul mate to be happy together with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426769**

SUE, 46, confident professional, sporty/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426757**

CARIBBEAN woman, 57 years young, medium build, WLTM a nice man, 55-63, for days out socialising, romance, non smoker. **Text only. Mailbox: 5774104**

SARAH, 38, nice looking blue-eyed slim brunette, WLTM similar lonely male for fun times hopefully leading to LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426709**

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CHRIS, 40, attractive slim sophisticated redhead, seeking male 30-50's to relax with and get to know. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426301**

CATHY, 40s, slim attractive lady with an open-minded attitude to life, and WLTM a man of any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426579**

SUSAN, 41, sophisticated, confident, discreet, attractive female seeking professional male over 38 for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426557**

KATHERINE 38, attractive, single, very lonely and looking for love, fun and male companionship. pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426595**

KAREN, 46, witty female who loves to laugh, WLTM similar male to share interests, romance, cosy nights in and more. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426335**

BROWN eyed female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5806373**

LOUISE, 40s, youthful looking female looking for spontaneous male to put some love and lust back into my life. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426321**

FARMERS daughter, 69, single, likes heavy horses, animals, meals out, GSOH, friendship only, 65-75. **Text only. Mailbox: 5799589**

JAN, 46, lonely divorced romantic female, brown hair, green eyes, curvy feminine figure, employed, OHAC, WLTM attentive male for TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426255**

PAM, 40, cuddly feminine young looking female, OHAC, financially secure, looking for fun times without complications with like-minded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426253**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426349**

JANINE 40yrs, very cute petite artistic female who has a real passion for life, WLTM similarly passionate male for tactile LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426125**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426345**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426343**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426341**

SUE, 38, petite blonde, curvy size 8, outgoing, cultured, enjoys cosy night cuddles, seeking discreet loving male to make me feel special. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426219**

SARA, 43, educated independent attractive female, nervous about dating through advertising, so pls don't disappoint me by not replying. I promise I wont disappoint you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426161**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425931**

CHLOE pretty single female 36yrs, dark hair/eyes, slim build, very lonely and looking for reliable discreet male for mutual companionship maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426079**

BROWN eyed Brummie female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5780679**

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

DONNA naughty 40's, pretty, loves nights in, gym, theatre, seeks someone to make me laugh, give lots of cuddles and go on fun dates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425867**

DAWN 33yr old female looking for companionship with understanding, non-jealous male 35-55yrs. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425849**

ROZ, 43, tactile, sensual, loves to dress up, and wear heels, seeks genuine caring male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425597**

KAREN, 52, 5ft5, short browny/blond hair, green eyes, medium build, GSOH, loving, caring and kind, likes to do lots of things, likes a laugh, WLTM similar gent, hope to hear from you soon! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425917**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425933**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425929**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425927**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425327**

SARA, 43, educated, independent, attractive female, nervous about dating through advertising, so pls don't disappoint me by not replying. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425703**

BROWN eyed female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5501142**

JEAN, 40, 5ft slim, busty blonde, new to dating and fed up of going through the pub scene, WLTM down to earth male for adult company. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425671**

Single Men

PROFESSIONAL male, 42, been hurt in the past, looking for someone special, 30-42, ACA, single mums are welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427135**

ADVENTUROUS 36 year old, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

MALE 40 looking for sexy adventurous lady for some mad Summer time partying at my barn conversion with hot tub and countryside. **Text only. Mailbox: 5850530**

GEOFF 46, 5ft 10in, slim build, brown hair, blue eyes, N/S, honest, caring, likes cinema, walking, looking for female, 35-52, for relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 4172607**

MALE 73, GSOH, looking for a lady any age. I like driving, days out, country walks and possible holidays. **Text only. Mailbox: 5847956**

PHIL, 60, 5ft10, slim build, from Wolvs, OHOC, looking for a female, 18-55, for friendship maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427121**

IAN, 65, single, retired, GSOH, outdoor type, loves dogs and all animals, walking, countryside, meals out, cinema, theatre and visiting different places. WLTM lady with GSOH to share interests. Can travel anywhere. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426989**

MALE, 60, looking for a lady, 49-60, to take on my bike/car for days out/meals, to strike up a friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5838916**

STU, 42, medium build, 6ft, WLTM a woman, 25-45, for fun, friendship, maybe more. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426877**

STUART ex PE Teacher looking for lady to share good times with. Have GSOH, love days out and weekends away, eating out, walking, shopping. **Text only. Mailbox: 5833328**

MALE, 50s, slim, OHAC, from Wolverhampton, looking for a fun lady for a no-strings relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420265**

MALE, 60s, 5ft10, slim build, looking to meet female, for a mature adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426053**

YOUNG looking 63 year old male, GSOH, friendly, considerate, attractive, looking for a naughty female, any age/status, for adult fun and friendship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425243**

32 year old male looking for a nice lady for fun, maybe more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5831443**

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. N Shropshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411**

GENUINE 56yr old male, divorced, OHAC, looking for nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Wolverhampton. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417601**

YOUNG 60 West Midlands male, 5ft 8ins, grey hair, slim to medium build, sexy Scorpio, GSOH, broadminded, seeking an honest sexy lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426621**

MALE N/S, honest, GSOH, car owner, seeks female, 55-70 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416817**

CARING male, 63, N/S, GSOH, genuine likes music, travel, meals out, casual drink, seeks female, 50-70 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416997**

EASYGOING male, 63, genuine, N/S seeks female 50-70 for friendship and romance. Looks unimportant. Likes occasional drink, eating in/out, cinema and driving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418893**

SINGLE male, n/s, likes music, films, driving, nights in, dining out, trips, WLTM lady, 50-70, looks unimportant, for friendship and relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424927**

GENTLEMAN wishes to meet nice lady 45-60, West Midlands area. My interests are meals out, daytrips, music and reading. **Text only. Mailbox: 5817771**

GENUINE Stoke male 50s, friendly and easygoing, enjoys weekends away, seeks slim attractive female 35 to 50 for friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5817202**

MARK, single, 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, lots of interests, sport, music, cinema, long walks, eating out, looking to meet that special lady. If that sounds like you please get in touch! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426461**

SLIM male, blue eyes, dark hair, seeking that special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415697**

I enjoy the great outdoors with the dog, 36 years old, mature with a caring nature looking for a female age 28-48 for friendship, possible relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5803493**

CARING male, 6ft, blue eyes, slim, dark hair, honest, loving, down to earth, likes sport, music, cinema, meals out, seeking special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409803**

IAN, 5ft6, looking for somebody, 18-60, for general good fun times, days out, nights out, meals, sightseeing and visiting various parts of the country. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426437**

MALE 45 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, slim, likes sports, cinema, meals out, seeking loving, caring female to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406737**

YOUNG 60, West Midlands male, 5ft8, grey hair, wear specs, GSOH, sexy Scorpion, broad minded, slim to medium build, varied interests, seeking a genuine, honest, sexy lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426137**

40 year old Hungarian male, 5ft8, slim, dark blond hair, blue eyes, WLTM a lady 30-45 to spend some time together for friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5800702**

WILLIAM, young 56, would like some adult fun with a sexy lady, any age, wants and good time and discreet fun. **Text only. Mailbox: 5321154**

MARRIED businessman, mid fifties, seeks lady for discreet adult fun. Any age/looks unimportant. **Text only. Mailbox: 5534019**

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MALE, 58, works in agriculture, lives in North Shropshire area, likes the countryside, days at the coast even in the winter, meals out, looking for loving, caring, country girl, 50s-60s. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426037**

SINGLE male, 31 years old, brown eyes, black hair, 6ft, seeks single slim athletic build lady similar age for fun, hopefully more. **Text only. Mailbox: 4765584**

JAY, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

CHRISTIAN, 57, 6ft, dark, likes walking, nice meals and socialising, looking for discreet times with a similar fun lady. If you are interested please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425947**

STEVE, 59, sincere and genuine, likes pub meals, country walks and cinema, seeks Chinese, Tia, Black, Asian or Italian lady, looks unimportant but personality is, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425831**

I am looking for a lady friend to enjoy my retirement with. I enjoy going out for meals and would like some company. **Text only. Mailbox: 5777872**

MALE, 60, tall and slim, WLTM older female of larger build, any age, any status, for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425807**

TALL male, 58, seeks larger woman, any age, for discreet fun, married or single. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425643**

GENUINE male, 37, friendly and easygoing, enjoys sport and keep fit, WLTM genuine female 25-45, for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420253**

TALL, dark, attractive male, 57, WLTM an attractive female for discreet daytime fun, 25-50. Can travel. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425759**

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GAY feminine female with GSOH WLTM gay feminine females for friendship, possible relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5631357**

GAY man 65, seeks male to give me a massage. **Text only Mailbox: 5537379**

MATURE bi xd looking for a mature gay or bi male in the Birmingham area. Cannot accommodate. **Text only. Mailbox: 4758692**

ANNIE, cross dresser transvestite, seeking another cross dresser transvestite for discreet fun and relationship, in the Shropshire area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423075**

GAY male, 45, unsure, seeking male no older, very lonely, had heart broken, no confidence, frightened what people think, trying to find love. **Text only. Mailbox: 5826865**

BI male, submissive, seeks discreet NSA fun. **Text only. Mailbox: 5560402**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

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Suzuki's new Swift sets sights on rivals

When you first set your eyes on the Swift it is an attractive little car and inside it is unpretentious

By Simon Davis

When the first images of the new Swift were released, it wasn't exactly met with a warm reception. To many, the character of the earlier models had been lost, leaving a rather sober-looking and soulless hatchback in their place.

The good news is that in the metal, the Swift is a car that quickly grows on you. The more time you spend with it, the more you come to like its new aesthetic. While it might not be sort of car that tugs on your heartstrings and inspires on overwhelming sense of desire when you first cast your eyes upon it, it's still an attractive little car.

If you were to sum the feel of the Swift's cabin up in one word, it would have to be 'unpretentious'. It's not the sort of car that's gunning for the position of best in class as far as its interior is concerned, which means you can forgive the abundance of scratchy plastics that are used throughout.

The Swift won't be the subject of many complaints as far as interior space is concerned – particularly in the front. Headroom is plentiful, and while the Suzuki is a fairly compact little car, it certainly doesn't feel cramped.

Family buyers will be pleased to hear that a similar theme continues in the back seats, too. Although the new Swift might be 10mm shorter than its predecessor, headroom has not been compromised in the rear, and adults will be able to sit in comfort even if they find themselves behind a taller front passenger.

At 254 litres, boot space is hardly class leading, but it will easily swallow a couple of weekend bags and still leave a fair amount of space to spare.

The boot space swallows a couple of weekend bags

Suzuki offers the Swift with a choice of two different petrol engines. The first is the 1.0-litre, three-cylinder Boosterjet unit that has appeared in the likes of the Baleno and S-Cross and was fitted to our test car. In standard guise, it produces 110bhp and 170Nm of torque, and is capable of shifting the Suzuki from 0-60mph in a not-so-swift 10.4 seconds when paired with a manual transmission.

Our test car featured Suzuki's 'mild hybrid' system, known as SHVS. This offers a slight – although barely noticeable – boost in performance over the regular engine, while fuel economy improves from 61.4mpg to 65.7mpg. CO2 emissions stand at 97g/km with SHVS, compared with the standard engine's 104g/km.

While the Boosterjet is certainly a competent little motor, and does a good job of getting the Swift up to speed in a respectable fashion, under hard acceleration it does sound strained.

A larger 1.2-litre four-cylinder engine is also available with the Swift. It produces 89bhp and 120Nm of torque for a 0-60mph time of 11.7 seconds. This engine is also available with the SHVS system, which allows for CO2 emissions of 101g/km, while fuel economy stands at 62.8mpg on the combined cycle.

While the Swift is by no means a hugely powerful car, thanks to its small size and the fact that it weighs just 840kg, on a windy road it feels like a little go-kart. The steering is light and allows you to point the Swift where you want with ease, while the notchy five-speed manual has a purposeful feel to it.

There is a fair amount of body roll through the corners, but as far as grip is concerned, the Swift feels planted. Rough surfaces can cause it to bounce around a bit, however, so it will be interesting to see how it copes on British tarmac.

The Swift was well-mannered on the motorway, and didn't feel at all unstable at cruising speeds. While there was a fair amount of wind noise, it isn't enough to make a long journey exhausting. In town, its small proportions made navigating tight, busy streets much easier, as did its light controls.

Trim levels follow the typical Suzuki format – there's the entry-level SZ3, followed by the SZ-T and the top-of-the-line SZ5.

Suzuki can consider the new Swift a job well done. It's certainly not the most exciting car on the market, or the most luxurious, but there was something rather charming about its unpretentious, no-nonsense manner.

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Swift range official fuel consumption figures in mpg (L/100km): Urban from 44.1 (6.4) to 58.8 (4.8), Extra Urban from 65.7 (4.3) to 76.3 (3.7), Combined from 56.5 (5.0) to 65.7 (4.3). Official CO2 emissions from 114g/km to 97g/km.
The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results.

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, June 1, 2017

There's now a more sports car-like front grille

Topless driving in car that puts a smile on your face

By John Griffiths

It seems that throughout the history of the motor car there's one genre to which most of us have admired or aspired to at some time in our lives.

That is the open-topped sports car for enjoyng that incomparable wind-in-your-hair experience on a sunny day. Or even just a dry one.

For the enthusiast it's a chance to listen to the growl of the four exhausts in all their glory. It's not even that you have to drive fast – increasingly difficult and potential illegal in this country – to put a smile on your face but most owners like to know that their car CAN perform, and that it has the necessary agile handling to match.

One of the latest of this exotic breed is BMW's M4, which comes in both coupe and convertible forms, but even given the significantly higher price the latter still has a devoted following and is a relatively big seller.

Most drivers know, of course, that the 'M' tag is used to designate BMW's flagship sporting models, so while power and performance are verging on supercar territory, you have a full four-seater with a practical cargo space to boot. Plus a top of the range specification. As you'd expect, that is reflected in the price: the 4 Series Coupe

It is a genuine four-seater

range starts from £31,600 and the Convertible from £36,350 while the M4 starts at £56,385 and £60,480.

The test car was fitted with the competition package, plus a host of options including advanced parking package, head up display, LED adaptive lights, 20-inch alloys, Apple CarPlay and upgraded entertainment system among others, taking its on-the-road price to £70,000.

The new M models are powered by a three litre twin turbo engine rather than the V8s of yesteryear. As in other sectors of the car industry, the use of a smaller capacity engine with turbocharger is necessary to improve efficiency and reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

There's no shortage of power, with 450PS, so you won't be surprised by the 0 to 62mph sprint time of around four and a half seconds. The engine will rev to an impressive 7,500rpm but there's no really need to do that as maximum torque (a hefty 550Nm) is available from just 1,850rpm. That means it is extremely flexible and responsive, pulling strongly from low revs and ready to get up and go with the lightest pressure from your right foot. It won't disappoint, and I have to say I was very glad of the optional head-up display to keep me on the right side of the law, and without taking my eyes off the road.

Fuel consumption is likely to be anywhere between 20 and 30mpg, depending on how enthusiastic you are, but the official CO_2 rating is 231g/km.

One of the significant under the bonnet changes to the new M4 is a substantially revised suspension system, design to improve roadholding and handling without compromising ride comfort. It is still sportily firm, especially with the competition pack, but it doesn't crash or bounce over some of the worse irregularities in the road surface. How much of a handling improvement the new suspension provides is almost impossible to assess except on a track: it certainly performs more than adequately on typical A and B roads. Steering is quick and precise, impressively so for a two tonne car.

It has also had a few styling changes including new LED foglights and a more sports car-like front grille, plus all the latest safety technology.

The rear seats actually provide reasonably generous room for a sporty convertible, even for adults. With the roof down though, most drivers will probably prefer to swap passengers for the fold-up diffuser which fits over the rear passenger space to prevent cold air being drawn into the vacuum as the car splits the air and consequently chilling those in the front.

The new M4 Convertible is certainly a pretty car and performs as you'd expect of anything with the 'M' badge on it. The fact that it's a genuine four seater and has a reasonable amount of luggage space set it apart from many of its rivals, so that £60,000 price tag looks a little more reasonable against some of its rivals such as the hard-topped Porsche Panamera.

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11	Ford C-max Diesel Estate 1.6 TDCi Zetec Blue 57k	£5,995
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Lining up for a team picture back in 1955

Wightwick Cricket Club Express & Star KO champions in 1968

Pete Connelly, vice-chairman, Eve Connelly, 11, Alan Russell, life member, George Turner, 10, and chairman Tim Banks

Wightwick 2nd XI Chronicle Cup Winners in 1973

Good innings! Cricket club in 70-year run

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Jessica Labhart

IT had humble beginnings – five men met in a pub and each put a pound in to set up a cricket club.

Now, 70 years later, the Wightwick and Finchfield Cricket Club is appealing for former members to get in touch and help them celebrate this special milestone – with one of the founder members due to attend.

The club began in 1947 when five men, returning from fighting in the Second World War, met at The Mermaid Pub, on Bridgnorth Road and decided to set up a cricket club.

Each of them put a pound in the kitty to begin the set-up of the club, which they hoped would go some way in uniting the post-war community and bring some much-needed leisure and sporting time into the area.

Popular

John Hulme, Bill Bolle, John Tuner, Ron Hampton and Fred Meredith each put their pound in. A public meeting in 1948 officially recognised the club as Wightwick Cricket Club and their first ground was the meadow in front of the then Castlecroft Hotel. It later joined with Finchfield Cricket Club in 1988 and became the club it is today.

Indeed, it now boasts hundreds of members, with thriving adult and youngster teams who play out of their home on Castlecroft Road.

Over the years the club has also hosted several international teams including Sri Lanka, Fiji, East Africa, Singapore and Argentina.

Chairman Tim Banks said: "The club is incredibly popular in the community. We welcome people of all ages to come and try out the sport and take part in the social events that we put on regularly. It's a real family club and still operates in the spirit in which it was intended all those years ago."

The group is holding a reunion event on July 14 at the clubhouse to recognise the contribution former members made to the club. One of the founder members, John Hulme, who is in his 90s and lives in Finchfield, is due to attend.

Lifetime member Alan Russell, in his 70s, has been a member for more than 30 years. He said: "It's so important that we get the former members back together to show how the club has developed. We are particularly looking forward to welcoming John back, as I imagine it has changed quite a lot since he was last here!"

The clubhouse was totally redeveloped in 2005, after £250,000 was sourced by, the then, chairman, Pete Connelly.

Now, the clubhouse is no longer known as 'the wooden hut' – but includes a bar, seating area and other facilities.

Mr Connelly said: "The club has stood the test of time because of the current and former members who knew and continue to recognise that it would always be an important part of the community's life."

His daughter, Eve, aged 11, plays in one of the junior teams. She said: "Cricket is just so much fun."

Anyone who would like to attend the event should email wandfcc@outlook.com.

Wolves All Stars play in hospital fundraiser

HOSPITAL staff are getting on the ball for a charity football match at Chasetown FC. Cardiac theatre will line up against a team of Wolves All Stars at the Scholars ground in Queen Street, on Sunday, August 13.

The aim is to raise as much money as possible for the coronary aftercare support group at New Cross hospital. Proceeds will be used to buy vital equipment for the heart and lung centre. The kick off time has yet to be confirmed, but ticket prices will be £5 with under-10s admitted for free.

Chris Jukes, Operating Department Practitioner said the match was cardiothoracic theatre's first fundraising venture. If the big game is a success they will be looking to stage a match every year.

He said: "I have been here for just over three years. In this time we have seen cuts after cuts on our spending and less and less new equipment is being brought through. One specific piece of equipment we would like to put some money towards would be a new Transesophageal Echocardiogram machine (TOE). The TOE machine is a very valuable piece of equipment but unfortunately we do not have enough to ensure the highest level of treatment to patients while in theatres. Due to only having two we are unable to use it for every patient when three theatres are running."

Flanagan looks to end injury woes

WALSALL'S Reece Flanagan has vowed to work through the summer to ensure he is fully fit in time for pre-season. The 22-year-old has endured an injury-blighted year after first tearing his anterior cruciate knee ligament back in April 2016.

Flanagan battled his way back to full fitness only to then dislocate his shoulder in his first game back for the development squad. But after recently taking part in a two-day training block, the midfielder believes his injury woes will soon be firmly in the past.

"The aim is to come back for pre-season as normal," he said. "I need to make sure I build strength over the summer. But I can start earlier with my fitness than the rest of the lads this season. We've got another six weeks until we start, so I can build my fitness ahead of pre-season."

Boss Jon Whitney said Walsall would be careful how they monitored Flanagan's shoulder.

"We'll give it as long as we can before we start to put that through real force," he said.

Rutter well placed for spot on TT podium

THE biggest road race of the year is almost upon us – and Brierley Hill-born Michael Rutter has not been better placed in many years to snatch at least a podium.

Rutter remains one of the best in the business and, after a stunning North West 200 in Northern Ireland, when he secured three podiums as well as a 14th victory, many are touting good things at the Isle of Man TT.

But, as ever, the 45-year-old is keeping his feet well and truly on the ground, particularly as he had to squeeze in another National Superstock 1000 race in over the bank holiday weekend before making the trip across the Irish Sea.

"A lot people having been asking me if I fancy a podium because of how well the North West went but the TT is just a completely different place," he said.

Rutter this will be competing in three different classes this year, which equates to five races. But he is sure to be challenging the top five, at least, in the classes he has confirmed – the Superbike, Superstock and Lightweight, or Supertwin, classes.

Rutter will be be racing a Bathams/SMT BMW on in the Superbike and Superstock, and a Paton in the Lightweight. Rutter will in action on his superbike on June 3 and June 9, the superstock June 5 and lightweight June 7.

Sport

What an innings! Club celebrates 70 not out

Page 39

Wolves fall down into drop zone

VICTORY by Walsall pushed Wolverhampton into the Birmingham & District League Premier Division relegation zone. Overseas player Sivakumar Duvvarapu hit 105 as the Gorway outfit reached 227 all out against Wolves, for whom Johannes Bothma took 3-30.

After losing early wickets, skipper James Hammond revived the visitors' hopes with 59. However, steady bowling from medium pacers Ed Denham (3-23) and Robbie Byrne (3-31) maintained control for Walsall, who earned their third win of the season.

West Bromwich Dartmouth were beaten by Dorridge earning their first victory of the season. Kadeer Ali (83) and Abid Ali (54) hit half-centuries as Dartmouth scored 260-6, but Dorridge got home with four wickets in hand.

Smethwick led the way by 15 points in Division One after extending their unbeaten run to five. A tight Smethwick attack bowled Tamworth out for 174 – left-arm spinner Sunny Singh (3-45) had the best figures. A third-wicket stand of 74 between Mo Sheikh (61no) and Vikram Sodhi (37) paved the way for overseas debutant Gurvinder Singh to finish the match off in style with an unbeaten 34. Himley (204) were beaten by Bromsgrove (225-7). Mubeen Rashid hit a composed 122 as Cannock & Rugeley Hawks brought Fordhouses back to earth with a bang in Division Two.

Fordhouses had won their first four games of the season to top the division, but Rashid led Hawks to 271-8.

In reply, Fordhouses crashed to 100 all out as Nadeem Akram picked up 4-37.

Wombourne's six-wicket win over Sutton Coldfield at moved them up to third. A mean spell of 4-18 from David Hemming helped to restrict the home side to 169 all out. In response, Karl Quiney (59no) steadied the ship after Wombourne lost three wickets for 42.

Walking football tournament in honour of Steve

A WALKING football tournament has been held in honour of a much-loved player who died suddenly. The Steve Bragg Memorial Tournament featured eight walking football teams from all across the West Midlands.

It was in honour of Tividale-born Steve Bragg, who passed away aged 51. Mr Bragg died suddenly while on holiday in Spain in April of last year. He was a keen footballer who had recently joined walking team Hartshill Stollers, based in Dudley, which organised the tournament in his honour. Among those in attendance at Summerhill School in Kingswinford for the six-a-side tournament was Mr Bragg's son James, daughter Rachel Foley and two-year-old granddaughter Ronnie. James, aged 23, from Tividale, said: "He was the best dad in the world, the greatest man."

James was competing on the day with Tividale side Old Studs, the team his father used to play regular football for.

The team, made up of Steve's old friends and his son, made it through to the final but ultimately lost out to LPF88 of Leicestershire.

Black Country boxers line up at venue

BOXING

A HOST of Black Country boxers are set to appear at Walsall Town Hall in July. BCB Promotions' mammoth 10-fight show – 'Made In the Black Country', sponsored by Grosvenor Casino Walsall – takes place on Friday, July 7.

Walsall's Golden Boys, Luke Paddock (16-2) and James Beech Junior (2-0) are both in action.

Paddock has stepped down to lightweight and, after successfully navigating Dean Evans earlier this month, will be looking to make a statement this time around. Beech Jr has made an impressive start to life in the paid ranks, racking up two wins since turning pro in February.

Unbeaten Halesowen super middleweight, Lennox Clarke (15-0-1), features. Fresh from his draw with Karel Horesjek on Matchroom's huge Birmingham show at the Barclaycard Arena, Clarke wants a swift ring return. After debuting in Birmingham last month, Brummie cruiserweight, Aaron Murphy, and Tividale welterweight Ryan Stewart Davies (both 1-0) will be looking to carry on from where they left off.

Wolverhampton's Lauren 'Black Widow' Johnson (1-0) will once again be putting women's professional boxing on the map as she looks to build on her impressive debut earlier this year. Burton's Leon Gower (4-0) put in the performance of his career earlier this month as he stopped fellow prospect, Jack Summers, in five rounds. The super featherweight has been added to the bill alongside West Bromwich light heavyweight, Josh Stokes. Stokes (2-0) will be buoyed by his recent performance against teak-tough Curtis Gargano.

Poland's Krystian Raczek makes his debut at super lightweight whilst West Bromwich welterweight, Tommy Loach, completes the card. Loach moved to 3-0 with a career-best win over Adam Bannister earlier this month.

PULIS IN £20m DEENEY DREAM

ALBION are willing to smash their transfer record to land Troy Deeney this summer – if Tony Pulis is still in charge.

Deeney, who turns 29 next month, could even become the highest-paid player at The Hawthorns should the Baggies persuade Watford to part with their talisman.

Boss Tony Pulis is a huge fan of the Birmingham-born striker and eager to bolster his forward line having spent the season with Salomon Rondon and Hal Robson-Kanu as his only options up front.

Deeney is skipper of the Hornets and adored by supporters at Vicarage Road, where he has spent seven seasons since leaving Walsall in a deal worth £500,000. But he endured an indifferent second half to the season under Walter Mazzarri and though the Italian was axed at the end of the campaign, there are suggestions Deeney may now be willing to move on.

Albion have no intention in paying the £35million asking price reportedly set to be demanded by Watford, while the £25million figure which would activate Deeney's release clause is also considered a little steep.

The Baggies would also be ready to offer Deeney a salary in excess of the £75,000-a-week earned by Jonny Evans, their current highest-paid player. Walsall would meanwhile net a cash windfall thanks to the 20 per cent sell-on clause inserted in the deal which saw the frontman depart the Banks's. Deeney still has four years left to run on his contract and Watford will look to hold out for the highest possible price, with the Baggies acknowledging patience will be required. Albion have meanwhile confirmed they will send sides to both Bristol Rovers and Slough Town for pre-season games on Saturday, July 29.

Meanwhile, defender Gareth McAuley has backed Tony Pulis to remain as Albion head coach despite reports that the Baggies chief is considering his future.

According to The Times, Pulis is open to approaches from other clubs after becoming frustrated with criticism from Albion fans. Pulis is under contract until the end of next season and is due to sit down with chairman John Williams at the end of the summer to discuss a new deal.

Lakeside sink gutsy Heathens

Ryan Burton of Cradley Heathens, during the meeting at Monmore Stadium

CRADLEY just missed out on a consolation point as they slipped to a 49-41 loss at Lakeside.

They put in a gutsy display around the notoriously tricky circuit – but it was not quite enough as a faultless maximum from Zach Wajtknecht led the hosts to victory.

It was a strong all-around team display from Will Pottinger's side as they ran just six last places over the course of the afternoon.

But they also accounted for just two race wins – both from impressive reserve Conor Dwyer – as the Hammers' powerhouse top three of Wajtknecht, Ben Morley and Paul Hurry made all the difference.

Team boss Pottinger admitted they were frustrated to leave with no points to show for their efforts.

"We're slightly disappointed because we were hanging in there, but we went eight points down at the wrong time and couldn't get it back," he said. "It's a shame we couldn't get anything, but Lakeside is a tough place to go."

Cradley's Bank Holiday meeting against Belle Vue was called off due to bad weather and will be rescheduled.

LAKESIDE: Zach Wajtknecht 15, Paul Hurry 11+1, Ben Morley 11, Alfie Bowtell 8, Jamie Couzins 2, Nick Laurence 2, Alex Spooner 0.

Brummies' convincing home win

BIRMINGHAM sealed another convincing home win with a 55-35 victory over Buxton to move joint top of the Travel Plus National League.

The Surestop Brummies broke the 50 point barrier for a fourth time in five league meetings thanks to another solid team effort. Heat-leader trio Jack Parkinson-Blackburn, Liam Carr and Tom Bacon all scored 10 points a-piece while captain Darryl Ritchings chipped in with paid double-figures himself.

Layne Cupitt took the chequered flag in two 5-1s in his first ever meeting in the main body of the team and Macauley Leek and Kyle Roberts both enjoyed confidence boosting nights from reserve.

Team boss Graham Drury said: "That's what you call another brilliant whole team performance!

"Right through from 1-7 the lads impressed me and we didn't have one single weak link tonight.

"With Buxton having Max Clegg and Matt Williamson in their line-up, I said in the build-up to the meeting that our lower order could potentially be the difference between the two sides.

"While our heat-leaders were magnificent, I think we do have to pay special praise to Layne, Macauley and Kyle.

"They scored 18 points between the three of them whereas if you take away Buxton's top two riders, they only managed 12 between their other five.

"We're growing as a team meeting by meeting. They rode their hearts out and in addition they put on a great, entertaining show for the supporters because some of the racing tonight I thought was very good indeed."

Tom Bacon was awarded the Ductair Electrics Ltd Rider of the Night Award, mainly for his determined battles with Clegg and Williamson.

BIRMINGHAM 55: Jack Parkinson-Blackburn 10+1, Tom Bacon 10, Liam Carr 10, Layne Cupitt 8, Darryl Ritchings 7+3, Macauley Leek 5+1, Kyle Roberts 5+1. **BUXTON** 35: Matt Williamson 13, Max Clegg 10+1, Tom Woolley 4, Ben Basford 3, Shelby Rutherford 3, William O'Keefe 2, Carl Basford 0.

Triathlete Keith gets bronze medal

KEITH Bate from Black Country Triathletes brought home a medal this weekend finishing third in his category (60-64) and taking bronze in the British Triathlon Age Group Sprint Distance Triathlon Championships.

The race was held at Strathclyde Park and involved a 750m open water swim, a 20km bike and a 5km run. Bate finished in a time of 1:14:19 just 14 seconds off 2nd place with a 14:18 min swim, 36:52min bike and a 21:14min run.

★★★

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